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‘wall sandwich’

**The Architectural Gesture in Art Practice from Destruction to
Non-Construction**

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Ronny Hardliz

School of Art and Design

Middlesex University

London

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Abstract

This project uses and researches a particular art practice and its works. In it political and critical architectural strategies converge – convergences currently researched, generally, in cultural fields as modes of countering dominant techniques of governance. It investigates and, crucially, enacts and embodies such architectural art practice as a mode of having knowledge through the figure of non-construction.

As ‘creative work’ and ‘text’, in a confluent screening of films and live broadcasts in the Cinema Car as the base of encounter and conversation, and in a confluent writing of quotations and comments along practical, philosophical, and theoretical positions, it addresses and makes the gesture and term of non-construction, now employed in new locations and formulations, available for uses and debates on and in current practices and works of art.

The work draws on diverse fields spanning prehistoric life and art, the relation between art and life since the 1970s, discursive art practice, documentation, cinematographic and theatrical practices, curatorial practices, the relation between ideology, infrastructure and architecture, continental philosophy, and current practices of theory. Particular attention has been paid to the work of Georges Bataille and Walter Benjamin, accompanied by modern and contemporary thinkers and practitioners in art and architecture, often set in unexpected dialogue.

The work is a reflection on *praxis*. *The Study* performs a reduction of architectural art practice to discursive practice, supposedly the legitimate contender of contemporary art, revealing the architectural typology of the study as a spatial and material factor of discourse, applicable to the current problematic. *A Voiding* draws back such practice to architectural art practice probing the strategy of voiding as the discursive architectural gesture of encounter. *Building Cinema*, finally, actually building films and cinemas, reclaims the practice of filmic documentation as such a discursive architectural art practice.

Maintained in an economy of overspending, whose aim is not production but an understanding beyond it, the material offers artists the possibility of encounter along architectural strategies of non-construction. It also contributes to architectural discourse offering new possibilities for engaging with architecture through the work of art’s transgression of construction’s ideological constrains.

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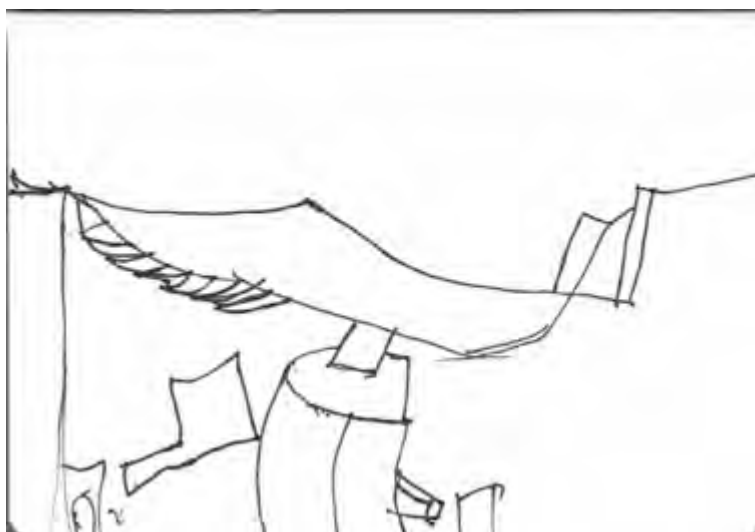


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Foreplay

When do you work? *Now...* What are you paid for? *Nothing—but: nothing!* How do infrastructures, apparatuses, and forms of life influence our work? *Work is a form-of-life that can either be dignified or subsumed by infrastructures and apparatuses.* How do we influence them? *This is why it is important, whenever possible, to affirm and dignify infrastructures and apparatuses as places and organisations of negative critique.* What don't you capitalise in your life? *It is possible not to capitalise. It is a question of differentiating the two meanings of 'representation'.* Who determines funding policies? *The police, I guess, as it regards policies...?* Does a PhD make one happy? *Walter Benjamin bought Paul Klee's drawing Angelus Novus in 1921 and left it with Georges Bataille in 1940. Benjamin ended his life today, 26 September 2017, 77 years ago. I finish writing my Ph.D. thesis today.* Who is allowed to do research? *Research is not allowed by someone but demanded from everyone—but not everyone can allow oneself to do research as such a social interlocution.* How white is your research community? *Very white, unfortunately. That's something to work on.* Where does your work stop? *At a stop sign—but then it moves on.* What goes in your CV? *I wonder, too...* Which currencies does our work circulate in? *Some call it 'friendship'.* How is your enterprise doing? *It's a spaceship. I guess it's fine. It has a guardian angel.* How many projects can one pursue at the same time? *Countless, but I wonder whether 'pursue' is the right term?* Can “work done out of love” be paid for? *It must be paid for.* How do we change our working conditions by talking about them? *Not sure we can. I'd rather say: use them...*

A bibliographic reference that relates to the topic of the conference and that is of importance for you:

Klee, P. 1920. *Angelus Novus*. Drawing, monoprint, oil transfer method with water colour, 31,8 cm × 24,2 cm. Since 1989 at Israel-Museum in Jerusalem.

(My responses to the questions of the SARN Conference 2017, ZHdK, December 8 and 9, on *Art Research Work*)

Instructions for Use

*No one can say without being comical that he is getting ready
to overturn things: He must overturn, and that is all.*

Georges Bataille

*To plumb the depths of language and thought
... by drilling rather than excavating.*

Walter Benjamin



Figure 3 Hardliz, R., *faire corps*, film, Berne, 2015, filmstill: the author, 2015



Figure 4 Benjamin , W., Walter Benjamin in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, photo: Gisèle Freund, 1937

Introduction

Engaging in institutions does not mean to conform to them. Rather, demanding that it could be otherwise and doing it otherwise means changing the existing conditions. It means making the lack of institutional infrastructure evident by affirming and dignifying it, unilaterally, thus saving it from its inferiority. Everything is on the table, equivalent, not to make it transparent, but for its dignity, because it's worth it. We say: that is the way in which it is worth it!

In this thesis I put everything on the table, not as honest critique but as a critique with an honest strategy. It consists of written and non-written work that should be of interest for discussion, in both content and form, not in terms of the quality or novelty of what it has produced but, hopefully, in terms of how it makes us understand something I subsume under the term *non-construction* in a new light.

This work is political because it touches on the conditions under which it is being produced. It affects them. It does not have a particular aesthetics, nor is it trying to escape or avoid either academic or artistic conventions. It pushes certain textual and non-textual material to the point of negation, through writing and other forms of practice – architectural gestures and documentary filming in particular. Neither antagonistic nor escapist, this approach both touches and distantiates. As opposed to ‘avoiding’ I call it: ‘a voiding’. Voiding means encountering while keeping an original relation to one’s ways of doing and using, one’s *ethos*. In voiding not only the institutional infrastructure one encounters is due to change but the voiding subject itself. It becomes subject by voiding and being voided in return.

There is a void in voiding. Negating an institution by affirming it results in negating oneself by affirming oneself as the experience of a new subject. The work is critical and self-critical. What is lost is not experienced as loss but as a critique. Art can do this: it provides the experience of a new critical subject by negative affirmation.

The notion of ‘non-construction’ relates ‘voiding’ to the realm of architecture. Non-construction affirms architecture as a site of destruction. This is not destruction understood as a means towards a constructed end; rather, it is destruction understood as non-conformist construction. It says more than form alone can say. It destroys the conformity of existing form by not building on it, by not construing. Rather, it attempts just building.

Architecture becomes a political subject when it succeeds in building as a means in itself, building understood as both the practice of building and the object building. It is building as an architectural language not of assembling words, but as speaking. There is the architectural gesture: it speaks.

The two parts of this thesis speak as gestures. At times, they take ‘words’ or ‘images’ from each other, not as empty shells, but to make them speak in their own right. The point of the text is to write *as* work and not to write *about* work. The only exit for relating to work other than text is to write about such work as a form of writing *as* work. This is also reflected in the final non-written part of the thesis, the Cinema Car. It is analogous to the text but using different practices. It parallels text as a spatial discursive art practice.

From an artistic point of view there is no difference between the introductory or conclusive sections of the thesis and the main text. Nevertheless, the latter, by not confronting the thesis in an evidently reflexive way, allows examining language as a form of writing with gravitational shifts and turns, as an experience of language rather than an argument. However, the experience of language speaks. The same is intended for the filmic documentation shown inside the Cinema Car, as well as for the Cinema Car itself – it is meant to speak.¹

Retroactive Summary

When I started the study for a Ph.D. in which the ‘creative work’² of one’s practices ‘forms the point of reference and principal mode of enquiry’, I asked myself what that

¹ I acknowledge Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s claim that the subaltern cannot speak. However, what is the task of the intellectual *vis-à-vis* the artificial machine in times humanity as a whole becomes subaltern to it? Is it up to the machine to constitute (*darstellen*) us? How to prevent the machine from substituting (*vertreten*) us? Or do we have words and gestures and means to use them that would void the machine of its representative power putting spoken and gestural speech of the intellectual into play to stage the speechlessness of those who cannot speak?

² In the *Regulations for Research Degree Programmes* of Middlesex University the terms ‘creative work’ and ‘text’ are used to differentiate the written thesis from ‘work [which] forms the point of reference and principal mode of enquiry for the submission’. (21) I use these terms in quotation

practice is. Is it really the architectural art practice I was practicing before the study, or is it not, rather, studying?³ Once I embark on the study for a Ph.D., isn't then the practice of studying the main practice and therefore the practice at stake? Shouldn't the first question be, then, what it means to study? Taking the study-practice for a Ph.D. as the starting 'point of reference and principal mode of enquiry for the submission' defines the study as a reflexive practice from the start and allows taking the study itself as both the method and object of reflection.

From an architectural point of view, the study is not merely an activity but also a spatial typology.³ This understanding allows the introduction of the 'creative work' of practices – architectural art practices in my case – as a practice that is not exterior to the study, as a distant object to be studied, but rather as an architectural art practice of studying. The method consists in reducing all the practices to the point where nothing but studying remains as a practice that can bear witness of the particularities of one's work.

Such a reduction and the detection of what bears witness is a form of research. It detects and posits the study as architectural art practice. Studying, from then on, is not just the intellectual practice of studying: it is the *spatial* practice of studying. The indistinguishability between studying and the study as architectural art practice creates a problem with regard to academic conventions as opposed to properly artistic methods. Even though it seems clear that the very creation of this indistinguishability is a properly artistic method it must be asked to what extent discursive art practice distinguishes itself from discursive practice as such. Discursive practice – as the supposed contender of contemporary art – offers a major terrain for the exploration of the indistinguishability between studying and the study as architectural art practice along language, speech, and writing.

Nevertheless, this indistinguishability – or the liberation from the need to distinguish – offers another base the main characteristic of which is openness. This openness is not arbitrariness. Decisions are taken upon criteria but they are not taken in order to achieve something. Rather, they are being taken in order to work out where these decisions lead.

marks while at the same time contesting the principality of 'creative work', because I claim that writing forms an equivalent 'point of reference and mode of enquiry' for the thesis. There is no principal mode.

³ The modern study emerged from the shift of medieval conservation of scripture in monasteries to the mercantile economy of knowledge in the Renaissance, evolving the monk's cell to a separate piece of furniture or small room, the *studiolo*, in a private palace or house. See: Leibenwein 1977.

Obviously, documentation must be an essential part of research that questions itself (a research of questioning, of questions rather than answers). Again, however, documentation is not so much a result that can be evaluated afterwards. Documenting is a part of the complex practice of studying and therefore, an active and integral part of the exploration of studying. Importantly, however, documenting opens a gate to visual and haptic forms of perception that distinguish themselves, at least as a first declaration, from the conceptual and linguistic determinations of discursive practice. Following the logic of the study, documenting can then be used to determine discursive practice anew as visual and haptic, rather than maintaining its distinction from it.

The aim of the research – once discursive practice was established and explored as an architectural art practice of studying – was to integrate any mode of architectural art practice as discursive practice (which I have also called, insufficiently, *spatio-discursive* practice). The move of the study is, first, reductively inwards into an architectural art practice as indistinguishable from discursive practice, and then dispersively outwards into a discursive practice as indistinguishable from architectural art practice. The first move – into discursive practice – merged my practices with the question what it means to study today. The second move – into a form of architectural art practice as a critical, material and spatial discursive art practice – invented an original practice of studying.

This relation is original because the practice it generates does not depend on the aesthetics of discourse. Yet, this practice differs from contemporary art practice in its very discursiveness. It speaks in order to understand what it says and, therefore, what it has spoken is non-presentable: although it speaks it represents nothing – nothing but the non-presentable act of speaking.

Filmic documentation played an essential role in the re-establishment of an original relation between my experiences and my practices. The decision to work with film in a setting that operates along my practices is already rooted in these practices: filmic documentation as a means of expanding or blurring the site of the artwork. However, a decisive moment of documentation related to this project was not filmic but graphic. When after a car accident I was spending more time at home, my then five years old daughter came to me with a black marker and said she was going to draw a tattoo on my arm. I decided to have this drawing tattooed there, as a way of documenting her work. This moment marked an exit from the academic aesthetics of the study. At once there was another practice involved, related to many aspects of my work, my research, and my history. Nevertheless, the new practice was potentially

discursive and allowed a practical discursivity speak as an equivalent part of the thesis in its own right.

The novelty in this practice may be explained by a shift of the centre of gravity in the relation between the work and the documenting camera. The focus is on the moves of the medium and followed by the action (i.e. actor's moves). That such action does not become obsolete or inferior, but on the contrary has the potential of filling empty moves of a given medium with meaning must be understood as an elaboration of a useful determination of non-construction.

It is by the attempt of such a determination of non-construction that my practices have changed. This – and the telling of this by means of the written thesis and the Cinema Car to those who can make use of it and respond to it – is an original contribution to knowledge.

Components of the ‘creative work’

Art

What is the practice at stake in research of which *practice* is a major component? What is the difference between art practice and research practice? What does it mean, specifically for an *artist*, to engage in such research? ‘The Study’ begins with such methodological questions. They engage with art practice or artwork in terms of *ethos*, that is, in terms of how things are being done, of specific habits and uses.

From a technical point of view my art practices are situated in the transdisciplinary field of art and architecture. More precisely, drawing on my professional architectural background, I engage in questions related to the *ethos* of making architecture through art practices and engage in questions related to art through the use of architectural experience. The architectural base of my art practices generates a field of research that operates in artistic modes reflecting the field of art from an architectural perspective; it allows for conclusions to be returned to architecture from

an artistic perspective. This hybrid operational field is always set in or in touch with either the fields of architecture, the fields of art, or fields that are themselves hybrid.

Despite this technical clarity, the practical question of *ethos* with regard to a mixed-mode study is less obvious. How and to which practice does the study relate at the moment one's main practice becomes studying itself? Intuitively, the answer from a standpoint of *ethos* was clear from the beginning: there cannot be a separation between research practice and art practice, between the practice of studying and the practice of being studied, within one and the same person. The only way to engage in studying one's own practice is to use the practice of studying *as* one's own practice by means of one's own habits, uses, or ways of doing; to find a way of engaging in the study as an architectural art practice.

The separation between the two modes of the thesis is purely modal: there is no hierarchy, no writing about practice or illustration of thought. There are two modes of the same *ethos*: a research into and through architectural art practices, once in the mode of writing, once in the mode of other – visual, haptic, acoustic, etc. – practices. The double meaning of the word 'study' reflects this double modality of the thesis, though not in a congruent way: the study as both research practice and an architectural typology. Both aspects of the study reappear in both modes of the study.

To engage in studying as a visual art practice, the first step, as suggested above, is to visualise the activity of studying as a spatial activity in a study room, by documenting it with visual media, i.e. the medium of film. As is well known, each practice when being documented – if conscious of it – changes under the apparatus of documentation.⁴ Documentation as such and its intrications with distance and neutrality is not at stake here. Strategically, it moves straight to documenting as an architectural art practice.

As the activity and the space of the study are merged – to study in a study – the two modes of the thesis, 'text' and 'creative work', merge as well, i.e. in the following ambiguous notion: 'to write on a wall', which can mean 'to write about a wall' or 'to write on top of a wall'. Writing is evidenced as a spatial practice. The documentation of building a wall and of the writing about this wall on top of it makes evident the spatio-discursive complex of questions that is related to spatio-discursive practice from the start. The spatial metaphors 'to write on top of a wall' and 'to build on top of a wall'

⁴ See i.e. Mieke Bal's investigation of 'first', 'second', and 'same personhood' in 'description' as 'narrative epistemology', (1993, 293–320) or how Pierre Bourdieu introduces 'temporal strategy' into anthropology on the basis of his observation that 'the object of [...] study contains [...] theoretical distortion inasmuch as [...] an observer [...] has no place [...] in the system observed [which] inclines him [...] to reduce all social relations [...] to decoding operations'. (2012, 1)

repeat in the discursive metaphors ‘to write about a wall’ and ‘to build about a wall’, the latter demonstrating the apparent discursive potential of spatial practice. The new wall was indeed parallel to an existing one, separated by only one foot. The new wall was built *about* another wall.

Equally, the practices of writing and building may be related by means of ‘writing on a text’ or ‘building on a text’. The spatial metaphors ‘to write on top of a text’ and ‘to build on top of a text’, which are to be taken literally, repeat themselves in the discursive metaphors ‘to write about a text’ and ‘to build about a text’. How does the building about writing relate to the writing about building? Obviously there is knowledge conveyed in both practices. But what is being conveyed in building on top of a building, that is to say, assuming that anything on top of which building takes place is a kind of built ground: what is building as such? And what is writing on top of writing if here too what is at stake is writing as such? These, retrospectively, may have constituted the unconscious but central questions of the study. They concern both a non-metaphorical use of architecture in writing and a metaphorical use of architecture in architecture itself, on the one side, but also both a non-metaphorical use of writing in architecture and a metaphorical use of writing in writing, on the other. However, they attempt eclipsing these concerns by extending the metaphorical use of architecture in architecture beyond a building about building onto a metaphorical use of building on top of a building, that is to say, beyond the metaphorical use of existing architectural images in architectural post-modernism. In analogy to pure language understood as the communication of communicability, such a pure architecture would be a *building of buildability*.

Writing a thesis is a spatial practice, however unspectacular. The documentation of writing with a camera is a first attempt to grasp it by means other than the language of words and concepts. Not surprisingly, such documentation changes the practice, not only due to psychological reasons, but also to the technical conditions of documentation. A study is often too small for the placing of a camera in such a way that it can record the space and its walls in their full height. As a solution either the activity can be changed or the means of documentation can be adapted. The camera can be turned by ninety degrees in order to capture a wall’s height. Through this simple gesture – a rotary motion – a vertical image emerges. When scaled down to fit onto a horizontal frame it allows two additional vertical images to be placed next to it. The

result is a triptych, which in a concrete example I called *A Portrait of the Artist Writing a Ph.D.*⁵ (Figure 34)

Moreover, rotation introduces the force of gravity into the medium of film. A sequence recorded in a vertical format when projected on the horizontal screen of a conventional cinema appears rotated by ninety degrees. Consequently, it makes the spectators' heads turn. Rotation as a particular practice of documenting changes both the documented practices and the practices of reception. Indeed, any practise of documenting research is itself a research practice that generates a change in both the practices of research and the practices of its reception – the way in which we watch or read its documentation.

The art practical works that originate within the frame of the thesis together with works that precede or succeed it complete a triptych. A selection of these works are contained within the book as images and within the Cinema Car as films thus evidencing that the reading of the thesis necessarily draws on its own *before* and *after*.

Moreover, the art practical work explicitly rooted in the thesis could be tentatively organised as another chronological triptych: the tattoo, the work *before* and the work *after*.

The works *before* the tattoo are guided by the study of the study:

- on writing (*A Portrait of the Artist Writing a Ph.D.*)
- on reading (*Ornament as the Science of Passionate Disinterests*)
- on thinking (*faire corps*, or, *Maybe Thinking*)

In this period, however, there is a lot of other work emerging that is less explicitly linked to the study, yet related to it. It consists in work emerging from institutional research projects (*Building Building*, *Just Architecture?*, *World Ornamental Forum*), or non-institutional art practices (*Are you here for the gravity?*, *Annunciazione*, *Exit Strategy I*, *Dendriform*, *Art Works vs. Artworks*). This third, relational triptych – as explicitly related to the thesis, as related to institutional research, or as related to independent art practices – is not chronological, but rather stratifies the work throughout the study. However, the tattoo marks the end of a clear separation of these strata. It is through the

⁵ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=382678>

If using a print version of this thesis, to avoid typing the URL for each video, go to the 'exposition' called *Films for thesis 'wall sandwich' – The Architectural Gesture in Art Practice from Destruction to Non-Construction* in my profile (Ronny Hardliz) on the Research Catalogue, where you will find all the films referred to in this thesis:

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/391954/391955>

experience of the tattoo and the questions it raises regarding rejuvenation, staging, or the inheritance of talent or trauma, that a new art research practice emerges. This practice is liberated from the systematic study of the study while at the same time it incorporates its methodologies.

The works *after* the tattoo are thus guided by a liberated study of non-construction:

- on rejuvenation (*Unoccupied Territories*)
- on movement image (film in Jericho; film with Abshalom Ben Shlomo; Cinema Car)
- on staging (visit of Cinema Jenin; *Horizontality*)
- on gravity (*Chauvet III, or the Cave of the Forgotten Dreams*; *Lascaux V, or The Birth of Art*)

Finally, the Cinema Car and the present text in another mode is the container and vehicle of the visual works that have been tentatively categorized above. Besides its use as a cinema theatre for the presentation of work, the Cinema Car is also a broadcasting device. The view of the driver can be projected directly on the screen behind the driver thus generating a movie that moves while the car moves. The driver, who is also the operator, can mirror the image vertically and horizontally. There is yet another mode of mirroring though: the projection of a preliminarily recorded film showing a ride and the attempt of the driver to match the real ride with the projected one, potentially evoking serious nausea. This is the closest the Cinema Car itself gets to *voiding*.

Architecture

‘A Voiding’, as the expression affirming the annulling gesture of architecture, precedes and follows the study. It precedes it logically as the *ethos* of a practice in place at the beginning of the text. Research, however, is not logical in the sense that each step is a consequence of the last. On the contrary, what precedes any study can only be named afterwards, as a consequence of the study. The Study does not know from where it comes until it arrives at a point where it has departed from itself. This point is reached at the moment when continuing art practical commitments integrated in an art practical field and working independently along the study cease to have a purely

potential stake in the study. Then this art practical work ceases to be obliged to have an explicit relation to the research. Then gestures themselves, architectural gestures in particular, achieve a discursive quality of communicability related to the research.

At this point architecture speaks about architecture in architectural terms, using architectural gestures as metaphors to tell a new architecture.⁶ Understood as architecture of architecturability such architecture relates to but goes beyond a post-modern ludic application of quotations and styles.

With regard to this research the moment when art practice turns into research practice without the need of mediators – this moment is identified with the tattoo – led to a distancing from the study of the study and to a liberation that allows translating the sudden interest in questions of inheritance of talent and trauma as related to the tattoo and the history of my family into a fictional research of artistic roots, which I also called my (inexistent?) Jewish roots. Thus, the intuitive decision to undertake a research travel through Israel and Palestine in February 2016. Surprisingly, those instantiations that at the time of production seemed most explicitly related to the researched ‘voiding’, however, turn out to be less productive than others. These initial instantiations are: first, the work *Exit Strategy*,⁷ (Figure 45) which consists in carving spherical bowls into an abandoned concrete pedestal in front of the Museums of Bat Yam, produced with a an angle grinder as a performance during the opening of the group exhibition *The Kids Want Communism*,⁸ leaving behind a public art work that today mainly serves as a bowl for birds to drink from and bathe in after rain; and second, the work *Unoccupied Territories*,⁹ (Figure 39, Figure 48, Figure 49) in which teenagers from the desert town Arad, who were interested in learning how to become an artist, collaborate on an artwork by digging a hole, which should become the scene of a short video, in the garden of the local artist residency *Art and Architecture Arad*.¹⁰ While the difficulty of the first work is to create and maintain a relation with the exhibition that is both in touch

⁶ Compare with the concept of ‘Architecture as Metaphor’, which the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki defines with regard to both the current condition of architecture and Kojin Karatani’s book with the same title. (Karatani 1995, vii–xiv) With Karatani’s discussion of ‘Wittgenstein’s architecture’ I became more interested in Wittgenstein’s thought. While it is not within the scope of the thesis as it stands, I feel there may be work of relevance to be done in the future.

⁷ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391972>

⁸ *The Kids Want Communism* is a continuing collaborative engagement with a contemporary determination of communism curated by the museum’s director curator Joshua Simon.

⁹ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391962>
And: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391964>

¹⁰ The residency is the outcome of an art and community project curated by artist and activist Hadas Kader, Art and Architecture Arad, now extended to the Arad Contemporary Art Centre.

with and out of reach for the exhibition, the difficulty of the second is the challenging connotations evoked by digging a hole on Israeli territory.

While these instances address issues like youthfulness and rejuvenation, film and documentation, graving and gravity, and while both employ voiding as a means of distancing by being in touch, producing a comical excess as real life, now they also appear as overly strategic and possibly even evasive. They lack the momentum of an isolated gesture that does not only void the institution (the museum, the State) but necessarily voids itself.

Such gestures of research travel are located elsewhere, as in the invitation from the artist Shuka Glotman to visit him in the Northern Galilee to dig holes there; in the filming of the road between old Jericho and new Jericho while riding the bicycle and holding the camera in my hand;¹¹ (Figure 47) and at the cinema of Jenin in Palestine, which by the very hope it emanates, in particular through programs for children, threatens some Palestinians in their economy of victimhood: hope, joy, and creative freedom provide enemies because they fuel arguments according to which the current state is unproblematic. These gestures are important with regard to the decision to transform my Volkswagen Multivan into a Cinema Car, the moving movies, and to drive to the South of France in order to explore caves with prehistoric paintings. This is the beginning of the chapter 'Building Cinema'.

Before that, defining the turning point, the aforementioned gesture of my daughter's tattoo-drawing occurred. (Figure 36) Given that a tattoo drawing consists of a large amount of small shallow holes in the skin into which ink is injected, my art practice of digging holes could now be interpreted as a practice of drawing – even if digging one single hole, then, is the most reduced possibility of drawing. Moreover, the familial privacy and intimacy of this moment also reconnected my practice of filmic documentation to my father's passion for amateur super-8 filmmaking, which I have inherited.

My daughter's marking may be interpreted as a form of reversed inheritance of a drawing talent. I never met my grandfather. Supposedly he was a talented draftsman. He owned and ran several bookbinding factories in Prague before their confiscation by the Czechoslovak Communist Party. My grandfather's talent marks my daughter's drawing. It has passed through my body back onto my body: it is an indirect signature of inheritance. I am marked by an inheritance, one that is not only hybrid, but also

¹¹ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391978>

indirectly by the *younger* generation: a reversed inheritance. Such drawing and digging now clear the research territory for an archaeological research practice linked not to scientific methods and objects but, rather, to a drilling art practice of graving, graves, and gravity. These issues concern life and death rather than knowledge.

I could ask what were the entanglements of my family with the machinations of the Nazi forces occupying the country during World War two, or if there are Jewish roots in my family that have been subsurfaced for those very reasons. Quite on the contrary, however, this research does not lead back to the roots, to my ancestors and their imbrications with those historical issues that today touch all of us in the West. On the contrary, it leads *forward* to roots. This is a specifically artistic use of inheritance. The staking of my personal life and history in research allows for invigorated steps to yet unknown terrains, which meet current urgencies that have seemingly nothing to do with my past. Yet, related to the potential past of the tattoo, the past that is yet to come, current urgencies attain a potential for alternate readings.

My research travel to Israel and Palestine may therefore be seen as a journey to my Jewish and, indeed, Muslim roots. And my father's passionate super-8 filmmaking might be interpreted as such a step forward to the roots, as a step away from my grandfather's drawing back to an alternate form of drawing. My own step towards architecture might be interpreted as such a step forward, retracing a genealogy from making graphs to making cavities and unhinging gravities, which point towards a further set of practices of acting. The tattoo, which might also be seen as the empty sign of contemporary melancholia, symbolises and gives permission to become active with potential sets of new critical architectural gestures, and beyond that, new forms of culture.

Film

Following the research travel in Israel and Palestine, 'Building Cinema' was initiated with field research to the South of France. With the converted Cinema Car it set out to explore the relation between cinema and prehistoric cave paintings. This investigation resulted in two short film essays. Each addresses the inaccessibility of a virtually present

origin. *Chauvet III (or the Cave of Forgotten Dreams)*¹² (Figure 40) is a film that relates to the famous cave discovered in 1994 in the Ardèche, containing prehistoric paintings aged approximately 36.000 years, closed to the public and with very restricted access even for scientists. The public can visit a nearby replica called Chauvet II, representing a deformed composition of parts of the cave and its paintings. The aim of the filmed work is to dig a tunnel from the top of the rock under which the cave is located, attempting to enter it in vain. In the film I mark the position of the tunnel with red manganese pigments; however, I give up the work with the pickaxe once the red mark is chopped off because the mark was gone (and the rock was too hard). I have merely scratched the surface, seemingly leaving the rock as it was. The scene is shot with a vertically rotating camera, which results in an image constantly moving from bottom to top. This movement, rather quick, is unpleasant to watch. It induces experimenting with the screening device on which the film is shown by moving it in the opposite direction at same speed. In this way, the motive in the film can be captured to remain at the same location in the cinema space. The movement of the projector in the cinema annuls the movement in the film: a form of voiding.

*Lascaux V (or The Birth of Art)*¹³ (Figure 41) is a film that refers to the famous cave discovered in 1940 in the Vézère Valley. It contains prehistoric paintings roughly 12.000 years old. The paintings in Lascaux were accessible to the public at the time of their discovery, causing enormous damage to them due to massive changes of humidity, temperature, and other physical or chemical factors. As in Chauvet, there is a replica of parts of the cave accessible for the public in *Lascaux II*, just a few hundred metres away from the original. There is a travelling exhibition of some sections of the cave called *Lascaux III* and last year *Lascaux IV* opened down in the valley as an easily accessible replica of the full cave. I attempt intruding into the original cave in a less physically direct way. The camera rotates on the axes of the lens, turning the world upside down. Intrusion becomes suggestive. I approach the world as if it was an object in the gravitational field of a much larger mass, in the influence of which one would necessarily fall like a meatball from a plate once the world has turned around. According to this childish vision I do all I can to not fall by clinging to one of the trees that grow above the Lascaux cave.

¹² See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391999>

¹³ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=392003>

Components of the ‘text’

Art

‘The Study’ attempts situating spatiality in discursive practice. It grasps the commensurability of a spatial practice, linked to architecture, with discursive practice. It asks if in consequence discourse is intrinsically linked to language or if discursive practice rather belongs to the realm of gesture. What is a gesture? The concept of gesture used here is the one Giorgio Agamben detects in Marcus Terentius Varro who differentiates it from acting (*agere*) and from making (*facere*) as a third possibility in the sphere of action: carrying on (*gerere*), which also means to endure and support. Agamben puts gesture in the following formula: production is ‘a means in view of an end’; *praxis* is ‘an end without means’; and gesture is a means without end. (2000, 56–7) What is language? Certainly language here is not the language of linguistics. But it is not the human who speaks either. Rather, in Walter Benjamin’s words, language is something more akin to ‘the world essence [...] from which speech arises’, (Benjamin 2007a, 49).¹⁴ If such language arises from spatial materiality, how is discourse differentiated from spatial art practice or, indeed, architecture? I approach these issues through voices from the discursive field of visual cultures, artists and non-artists – Liam Gillick and Tom Holert in particular – searching an artistic *ethos* that should, if indeed applicable to discursive practice, reveal critical moments of differentiation, i.e. language as spatial practice and language as non-spatial, purely conceptual practice.

This exploration of discourse turns towards two current and related art practices: discursive art practice and artistic research. It identifies what the two practices may learn from each other. Artistic research may learn from ‘current’ discursive art practice that political potential stems from ‘art functioning as a structural parallel to contemporary working dilemmas in the dominant culture’. (Gillick 2009a, 7) Discursive art practice, on the contrary, may learn from artistic research that such political potential is not limited to the conceptuality of language. Rather, given the

¹⁴ Hannah Arendt uses these words of Walter Benjamin to describe what for him language is in her introduction to *Illuminations*.

commensurability of spatial and discursive practice, such political potential is related to the discursive potential of any critical practice whatsoever.

What then are the criteria for any practice whatsoever to be a critical discursive practice? As it is not enough to draw on research as a defining criteria the motivations of such practices must be located within the necessity of the practice itself. The discussion turns to an examination of poverty understood not as *less* but as *not possessing* – as related to the study of monastic life – or as the ecstatic experience of habitual conditions as a possible condition of critical discursive practice.

Architecture

‘A Voiding’ discusses discursive potential with regard to the spatial practice of architecture. It starts with an attempt to define a concept of architecture by juxtaposing two seemingly opposed conceptions, the declaredly anti-architectural standpoint of Georges Bataille with the materialistic understanding of architecture by Benjamin.

It then compares two texts that strike by the similarity of expressions and sentences that their authors use, to different ends. One text is by Douglas Spencer on the design for the new campus of Ravensbourne College, (2010) by Foreign Office Architecture (FOA). The other is by Philip Ursprung on Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal’s Nantes School of Architecture (2009). Spencer’s is a straightforward critique of the architecture of neo-liberalism, while Ursprung’s is a lucid revelation of an architecture that uses the same architectural language against or beyond what neo-liberalism wants to say. Expressions like ‘exhibition of circulation’, ‘learning landscape’, or ‘flexibility’ are applicable to both buildings and a differentiation is indeed difficult, at least conceptually. The difference is that in architectural terms these expressions in the Nantes School of Architecture are not where neo-liberal ideology would expect them to be: circulation is entirely accessible to the public, the learning landscape is large in dimension, as opposed to the entrance, moreover the large spaces intimate by being protected from the public by distancing to the entrance, and spatial flexibility offers the users many alternative or experimental uses of space.

With this in mind, such architectural voiding of neo-liberal ideology with regard to architectural discourse is reflected, asking questions about infrastructure and friendship. Finally, Nadir Lahiji’s question, ‘if architecture can be an emancipatory

project?', (2016) is discussed in relation to Lahiji's own approach to discursive dialogues. The discussion concludes by stating that, if discourse wants to connect with practice and play an emancipatory political *qua* politico-economical role for architecture as such, it must ask the question what an architectural space of encounter might be today in *discursive* terms.

What opens, in terms of what might be called a metro-political encounter, is the question of the self and how it relates to politics and to economy in a discursive practice. It may be that today the relation between the public role of the great spirit of the Enlightenment *vis-à-vis* the ignorant private people, including public staff, is reversed. While the people go public exhibiting even their bedroom practices, the great spirits must find ways of politicising the exhibition of the private self.

With a concept of architecture that includes its social, political, and economical conditions as part of its architecture, i.e. friendship, the discussion returns to Bataille and Benjamin, focussing on their encounter in Paris as an architectural event.

Film

'Building Cinema' approaches Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* as the central moment in the philosophy of art when the concept of the politicisation of art is derived from 'tactile appropriation' typical for architecture. Benjamin describes this mode with regard to the consumption of cinema by the masses as absentminded examination. What today's new digital media add beyond the relation between the masses and the screen is the direct relation between those who emit and those who receive, often reciprocally. Such immediacy vanishes in any attempt to record the encounter between the self and the real or potential other. It might be saved when enacted in the encounter between the self and the recording medium. Film and cinema appear as valid media for the exploration of encounter, immediacy, and contact.

What remains as the most reduced relationship between the self and the other, in terms of art, is theatre. In theatre the other is the recording medium of immediacy. It is not the theatre of the city, but a new theatre of the metropolis that functions in terms of an inherent reciprocity. It does so in the Internet, between private spaces. It does so in the physical metropolitical space, which becomes a space of visibility in which we must learn anew to hide in showing, thus politicising, which amounts to learning anew

how to love. The discussion turns to Agamben's suggestion of theory understood not as knowledge but as *touching* in order to grasp the qualities of theatrical immediacy as the base of a tactile theoretical discourse.

Methodological and Formal Reflections

The body of the main text was written as one singular gesture. The text is not composed or constructed from extant writing. What was written earlier reflects or reappears in another form in this singular gesture of writing. It is not a question of references made in the text, but of the particular use of the reference. The reference, like a moving camera, accompanies thought and writing to the next reference. There is a sketch that is both pre-existent and formed by writing. It is witnessed through the voices of others by means of quotations. Thus, the text always says more than I had in mind as the initial sketch. This sketch struggles with the voices when they do not want to say what the sketch would like them to say. Then it may remain unspoken, waiting for another voice to testify.

To speak in images: one could characterise this mode of writing with the technique of the fresco painting. As if written on wet lime-plaster, the characters merge quickly and irrevocably with the blank page. Text is more than the characters that compose it, as image is more than the pigments that colour it. Indeed, the text is an image resulting from the compositions of pigmenting characters. The procedure is sequential, and corrections in the form of scrubbing and blurring are difficult without leaving a trace. Reworking of the text is more like carving or engraving, the technique of *sgraffito*, scratching through the shallow depth of the text to reveal a lower layer of contrasting colour, with clear zones and those that are focussed.

In this process it is not so much a question of which imagination, or which significance of a reference is employed. On the contrary, it is a matter of using references like raw pigments, as material, making the forces acting on them visible through the effects on them. The choice of pigment might be more or less fortunate; it is not even a question of choice. The references are laid out repeatedly like containers of

pigments lending themselves to application. In the course of writing, a particular colour or shade may become necessary.

The text has three parts, which correspond to three stages of the research: in ‘The Study’ getting to terms with what it means to produce a Ph.D.-thesis as an artist, in ‘A Voiding’ introducing architectural spatiality as a critical methodology, and in ‘Building Cinema’ reflecting on filmic documentation as the central means of production of the thesis. Although this is the chronological sequence of the research (and of the writing) the topical sequence is based in architectural spatiality, explored in art practice, and developed in a potential filmmaking. This topical sequence is used to structure the text since its logic makes it comprehensible. A third combination, an emotional sequence, would put film first, for it is in this realm – through my father’s amateur filmmaking – that my phantasies took first shape, followed by architecture and then art.

The tripartite composition of the text, relating to architecture, art, and film, is also a triptych, like some of the films made in the course of this research. The tripartite form of filmic composition turned out to be a particularly productive form for research-based art practice – as can be seen i.e. in the film *Ornament as the Science of Passionate Disinterests*,¹⁵ (Figure 35) in which I read Bruno Latour and Vincent Lépinay’s *Die Ökonomie als Wissenschaft der Leidenschaftlichen Interessen*,¹⁶ wondering if and how this absolute conjunction of ‘passion’ and ‘economy’ can be questioned. However, the filmic tripartition is not the reason for a tripartite composition of the text.

Rather, as Gilles Deleuze suggest, the triptych ‘distributes rhythms’. (2005, xv) It generates movements. Hierarchies are put into question from the start. Multiple rhythms allow multiple readings. The logic of the triptych in this text plays out less as a synchronic capture of diverse parts, but rather as an equivalence of three sequences of text. The text does not entirely employ the conventional textual dramaturgy: the building of a logical argument. Every element is there to say something, but only what it says and nothing that is yet to come. ‘Monsters from the point of view of figuration’. (xv) But the elements are ‘bodies, heads, Figures [that] are made of flesh’ ‘modelled’ and ‘shaken’ by ‘invisible forces’. (xii) Every element of the text says what is yet to come by means of these ‘invisible forces’ that shape it, and what is yet to come consists in all the other elements at each point. The motto of the text is circular – as suggested by Roland

¹⁵ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=392041>

¹⁶ *The Science of Passionate Interests: An Introduction to Gabriel Tarde’s Economic Anthropology*. (Latour 2010)

Barthes for writing in general – and may at times appear ornamental: like the close confines of the world of the Cinema Car.

These close confines are not closed, though, if perceived from the perspective of a partially autonomous work of art. The pictorial references employed before – fresco, *sgraffito*, triptych – are not metaphors. This text uses texts as images to produce itself as image. In the same way in which we are not capable of capturing a painting instantly, our gaze wandering the surface registering formal details, structural dynamics, or narrative figures, the comprehension of a text operates with different optical foci, imaginative memories, and haptic appropriations. Text and image escape the death mask of a supposed end product by permanently referring to a before and an after that are touching upon the instant.

Ornament, Model, Utopia, Theatre

As it is made visible and accessible in the images of the works of art in this thesis *ornament*, but also the ideas of *model* and *utopia* were central at certain stages of the research. Ornament was studied in terms of gesture, as ornamental gesture, and as opposed to the superficiality of designs of façades (justified by the availability of high-end digital techniques and by the ecological necessity of focusing on the technical insulation of buildings.)¹⁷ It led to the annual *World Ornamental Forum* in which ornament is reflected in terms of an anti-economy.¹⁸ (Figure 26) It also examined a notion of model not as exemplary, but as constituent in its own right. A model is always a model and simultaneously a thing in itself.¹⁹ The double-sided operability of the model was also tested in the research project *Just Architecture?*, in which a mock-up conference was held. All the future participants were building a 1:4 scale model of the space in which the actual conference was to be held, rehearsing its content simultaneously. Related to the exercise of *writing on something* the possibility of a negative model – a mould or a filling – was extended to the notion of an inverse model – the everted or

¹⁷ See: Picon (2013). Also compare with modernist conceptions of ornament important for this work such as Krakauer (1995), Grabar (1992), and Loos (1998), as well as more recent studies on temporal aspects of ornament such as Dürfeld (2008), or Glaser (2002).

¹⁸ See the call for the WOF: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=393514>

¹⁹ For the architectural qualities of models see Healy (2008). On models also see: Avermate *et al.* 2011; or Nielsen 2010.

upended glove provides a plausible illustration – by actually building such inversions of spaces within spaces. The most economical technique developed used ultrathin foil brushed onto the constructed surfaces of the represented space holding either by electrostatic forces or by vacuum only.²⁰ (Figure 42) Both ornament and model belong to the utopian realm like masks, fairy tales, carnivals, or more existentially, as Michel Foucault shows in *Utopian Body*, to the mirror, the corpse, and the lover. A body must be made in order to exist, so Foucault, because a body as such, when it is reduced to point zero, is the first utopia. The reason why ‘we love so much to make love’ is because between the hands of the lover, ‘in love, the body is *here*’. (2006, 233) Through a series of papers given at the Utopian Studies Society Foucault’s concept of utopia, in which the dependence of utopia from other utopia is central, was studied and practically explored, that is to say, put the utopia of the paper itself at test.²¹ (Figure 32)

As important as these methodological explorations related to certain ideas were for the course of the research, they gave way to a configuration of terms more appropriate for dealing with the concerns at the heart of this study: theatre, theory, touching. While theatre is tentatively approached towards the end through the collapse of the cinematographic distance in the digital space of real time broadcast – which I have associated with the architectural typology of the *bedroom* as the metropolitan equivalent to the *theatre* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, noted by Jacques Derrida, has proposed as the place of speech in the city²² (Figure 43) – touching has been a central concern from the start, however presented in the notion of *encounter*. Whether virtually or really, whether lethal or missed, encounter provides the scene of knowledge.

²⁰It has not been answered in this research what force makes the foil stick to the wall, but an answer would probably provide a possible continuation of the exploration. Also note that an inversion is always potentially composed of the thing itself, while the negative is always incommensurable with the thing itself. In this, inversion is familiar with subversion. Nevertheless, the reversal of inside and outside, which is the similarity between inversion and negation, opens discursive options that seem more promising than subversion, for instance as related to a rethinking of the relation between private and public. For the making of an inversed model with thin foil see: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=393829>

²¹ See: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=392052>

²² ‘Can the theatre, which unites spectacle and discourse, not take up where the unanimous assembly left off?’ asks Derrida. (, 304) See where I read this passage and reflect upon ‘horizontality’, not horizontality: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=393516>

Cinema Car

Hitting the road in order to work on the crossroads of ‘theoretical coincidences’, the Cinema Car, (

Figure 5o) the moving movies, allows for a work of art in which the contact between spatial practice and discursive practice can be tested. The language of broadcast, projecting what the driver sees, can be transformed with simple techniques of mirroring, thus telling more than the driver wants the observers to see. Discussion inside the car can corrupt intentions reciprocally; losing one’s head, not knowing what to do or say. The moving movies move us just as much as lost speech, both physically and psychologically. Being in touch, whether in spoken language or bodily, allows us to divert and motivate currently dominant affectless forces towards affective ends.

Cinema Book

A flipbook is a handy booklet, in which on each page there is one image of a sequence of images, which, when being flipped through with the thumb at a certain speed, gives the impression, or illusion, of a moving image.

This thesis is not a flipbook in a formal sense. Nevertheless, it may work as one and leave the impression of a moving image to move. It flips from vertical to horizontal and back, and again, a flip around that occurs at the instant when actual images occur stills from films and snapshots from works. Demanding their space as images in their own right, the photographs and film stills are not scaled to fit the format. Rather, the format is flipped in order to accommodate the image in its full extension. As a consequence, either the head of the reader or the thesis (depending on whether printed or displayed on a screen) must turn. If nothing else, this change of format forces the reader to move.

This flip may seem forceful, but its aim is not enforcement as such, but the exhibition of force. Something forces us to think, said Deleuze. Anything can force us to think, when it hits the right chord. The flips of formats exhibited in this book are not only symbolic of the other forces in the text, possibly inciting us to think, but also of the affectless forces in the world we live in, which are not without effect and certainly

should force us to think. The exhibition here is not a demonstration of power, but an examination of technology, which reflects the mechanisms used in some of the films produced in the course of this study.

The forcefulness staged in the total flip around also resonates with what Hannah Arendt writes regarding Benjamin's method: 'so as not to ruin everything with explanations that seek to provide a causal or systematic connection'. (Benjamin 2007a, 48) She relates to Benjamin's method of 'producing a work consisting entirely of quotations, one that [...] could dispense with any accompanying text'. (47) In case some accompanying text by the author 'proved unavoidable, [it should] preserve "the intention of such investigations", namely, "to plumb the depths of language and thought [...] by drilling rather than excavating"'.²³ (47-8) Such *drilling*, she continues, 'resulted in a certain "forcing of insights [...] whose inelegant pedantry, however, is preferable to today's almost universal habit of falsifying them", [even though it is] bound to be "the cause of certain obscurities"'. (48) Therefore, as inelegant, pedantic or obscuring the flips may seem: with regard to their own *language and thought*, they certainly have no message.

When I follow the moves of the camera in some of the films then my parallel movement annihilates the camera's movement. There is no escape from the moves of the camera. There are only different ways of relating to them. Paralleling them generates surplus movements, which become visible as a difference to the ideal move – the perfect mirror image of the camera movement and, thus, the ideal of the camera movement itself. This is what generates comical effect and charming affect, a sense of conspiracy and, possibly, friendship. In this possible friendship lies the potential of establishing a contingent encounter between human beings across devices of control, such as a camera. Flipping over a device, not destroying it, is what possibly makes the other think.

This study is not content with leaving anonymous traces of iron sesquioxide powder like the 'unknown and suffering creatures' (Agamben 2000, 51) on the white wallpaper of Gilles de la Tourette's *Études cliniques et physiologiques sur la marche* at the Hôpitaux de Paris et de la Salpêtrière in 1886. This was, as Agamben notes, 'the first time that one of the most common human gestures was analysed with strictly scientific methods'. (49) Practice-led Ph.Ds. risk being nothing but automatic extensions of this first study, which could be seen as their *Urstudium*. Rather, this study attempts to be more like 'the happy and visible twins' of the patients at the Salpêtrière, whom

²³ Arendt quotes here and below from: Benjamin, W. 1966, *Briefe I*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, p. 329.

Agamben has detected in the ‘walking woman sending a kiss’ (51) as one example of the affective bodies from Eadweard Muybridge’s chronophotographies produced in the same years.

Discursive and Spatial Inspirations

This study in particular and my practices generally operate in the field of discursive art practices, which are related to the legacy of diverse fields of art spanning the second half of the last century. Without doubt, considering the methods of my art practices and what they produce, close affinities with some of the fields of this legacy may be acknowledged, i.e. Institutional Critique, Appropriation Art, Conceptual and Post-Conceptual Art, Curating, Documentation, Art in Public Space, Art and Film, Site Specific Art, Participatory Art, Performance Art, Social Sculpture, or Video Art and others. However, since this is not an art historical study – neither on the historic genealogy of discursive art practices nor on a particular field that has been caught up in it – no further explication is needed.

Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to identify some voices of the field of discursive art practices (which is done throughout the chapter ‘The Study’) but also the one field of its legacy that, if any, may be drawn to as an influence and creative reference point for my discursive art practices: Architectural Intervention. Clearly, in my case, Architectural Intervention – or what Peter Osborne calls ‘Architecturalization’ (2013, 141) – as the artistic contention with architecture is not just a reference chosen out of many, but the one closest to architecture as the educational and practical background of my discursive art practices. Architecture has, therefore, a twofold methodical influence: first, my architectural education significantly shapes my artistic ways of doing; second, the art historical legacy of Architectural Intervention draws on ‘architecture [as] an

archive of the social use of form', (141) which continues to be particularly influential for my work through the figure of Gordon Matta-Clark.²⁴

By cutting himself a 'wall sandwich' from a wall during the construction of the restaurant FOOD in Soho, Manhattan, in 1971, Matta-Clark, trained as an architect at Cornell University, makes abusive use of what exists and produces a use that exists only as such, without an end, as endless use.²⁵ This 'wall sandwich' suggests life by nutrition,

²⁴ Besides the *Cuttings* into real buildings by Gordon Matta-Clark, the analytical series of photographs and charts *Homes for America* by Dan Graham, which were published in the *Arts Magazine*, constitute a key work of this legacy. Characteristically, as with other art forms of the 1960s and 1970s, they operate beyond the traditional art spaces and critically engage with current social and political questions.

²⁵ Although my practice is close to what is subsumed under the terms 'spatial agency' and 'urban art', both of which I study and follow with interest, I do not consider myself an activist. I am not looking for 'other ways of doing architecture', (Awan *et al.* 2011; also see: Cupers *et al.* 2009, or Kossak *et al.* 2010) but for other ways of understanding architecture. Therefore Michel Foucault's 'heterotopia', Henri Lefebvre's concept of space, Marc Augé's 'non-places', Edward W. Soja's 'thirdspace', Chantal Mouffe's 'agonistic' public space, or even Homi K. Bhabha's concept of location, Richard Sennett's tropes of 'craft' or 'togetherness', Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory or Peter Sloterdijk's concept of 'spheres', albeit important for such understanding, are not at the centre of this work. Neither a (historical) analysis of the relation between art and architecture is the concern of my work, which acknowledges but excludes them (a selection would include: Andersen 2009; Bloomer 1995; Bruno 2007; Foster 2011; Kreider 2014; Papapetros *et al.* 2014; or Rendell 2007a).

Also, no distance marks my understanding of 'understanding', whether scientific nor poetical, which often relate to phenomenological or psychoanalytical thought. Hence, neither Gaston Bachelard's 'poetics of space', Michel de Certeau's invention of the 'everyday', nor Martin Heidegger's concept of dwelling appear in the text, no reference to Sigmund Freud's ideas of 'unconscious' and 'dreams', or Jacques Lacan's concepts of 'lack' and 'desire' and few writings from architectural thinkers such as Juhani Pallasmaa, Alberto Pérez-Gómez, or – less evidently – Anthony Vidler.

Though, it may seem that Heidegger should appear with another of his concepts: *Destruktion*, destructuring rather than destruction. Heidegger certainly reflects 'all research [as] an ontic possibility of Dasein', (2010, 20) and thus his own *Dasein* as researcher. However, *Destruktion* is supposed to 'stake out [ontological tradition's] limits', (22) which, by means of the very *Dasein* of the researcher and the 'factuality' of his questions, are already given. Whether the 'positive' intentions towards the past Heidegger claims for *Destruktion* as a means for a negating critique of 'today' are tenable in philosophical terms is not the question here. What is striking is the creation of formulations such as 'Ausstellung ihres "Geburtsbriefs"', (2006, 22) which can only be translated as both 'display' and issue of 'their "birth certificate"'. (2010, 22) Self-reference here seems to lead to a linguistic aesthetics that, when reading it, appears as if it was listening to itself – excluding the reader. This resonates with Benjamin's claim that 'no poem is intended for the reader'. (2007a, 69) However, in contrast to Heidegger, Benjamin declares it. In Benjamin, obscurity is elsewhere, not in an aesthetics that stands in for intentions; rather it is in the appreciation of that which cannot have intentions. Therefore it seems to me that Heidegger's formulation of a '*positive Destruktion*', which at times recalls capitalism's principle of 'creative destruction', is well preserved in this footnote.

Destruction, which in German would be translated as *Zerstörung* and has a much more violent meaning than *Destruktion*, was translated by Jacques Derrida as 'deconstruction', as is well known. Although Derrida is to be credited for exposing the hermeneutics of phenomenology as a self-referential system, my distrust in Derrida is based mainly on his complicity with what Mark Wigley has called *The Architecture of Deconstruction*. (1995) Although Derrida tries to dispel any architectural stylistic interpretation of deconstruction as a technique of reversed construction he

which is indeed given by the restaurant itself. But the actual ‘wall sandwich’ cannot be swallowed without causing considerable digestion problems. Hence, the ‘wall sandwich’ exists as a pure means without an end. Matta-Clark apparently pursued all of his activities for the sake of the means as such. He never stopped cutting while his gallery struggled with selling what he did.²⁶

Matta-Clark’s ‘wall sandwich’ and its implied ambiguities provide the title for my thesis, spanning an art practical field between building, consumption and digestion, language and society. On such a material basis, this thesis does not intend to add anything to knowledge – that is, if knowledge is perceived as a fixed state of the art, identifiable and definite at a certain moment in time. The novelty value of the thesis is defined in terms of ‘addressing’ and ‘making available’. From the start, I called this mode ‘non-construction’, a term I later found Denis Hollier uses in *Against Architecture, The Writings of Georges Bataille*. In my writing the term functions as a neologism. My use of non-construction is not necessarily congruent with Hollier’s. Nonetheless, it is the only example I have found close to my own practice – so close that it might almost be referred to as an origin. The term in general does not have a canonical state of conceptuality – and probably will not achieve one. It is certainly not the aim of this thesis to give a definition of non-construction, least of all a canonical one, but I explore this in relation to the paradigms presented.

While it may seem like jumping to conclusions, the best example of non-construction in my practice is the forceful link of the body to the medium film by means of gravity. In my exemplary cinematographic instances:

nevertheless interprets Bernhard Tschumi’s *folies* at the Parc de la Vilette in Paris as a representation of his philosophy. It is impossible to have a critical stance towards architecture and to society in general if understanding architecture as the one art that concerns each and everyone by means of its function of dwelling – by courting those architects who, in Philip Johnson’s coat-tails, created a star architecture under the spell of global capitalism. To use the most explicit *corpus delicti*: praising the perverse split in the bedroom of Peter Eisenman’s luxurious House VI (separating the bed in two thus forcing the owners to sleep in separate beds) amounts to betraying Gordon Matta-Clark’s *Splitting* of a suburban house at about the same time – which was a masterpiece of a critique of socio-political conditions. The delicacy of this example is that Eisenman was Matta-Clark’s teacher at Cornell University and that their enmity culminated in a show curated by Eisenman, in which Matta-Clark changed his mind overnight and instead of exhibiting objects shot through the glass of all the windows of the exhibition space with a revolver. Eisenman had all the windows repaired for the next day’s opening. *Jacques Derrida’s betrayal of Gordon Matta-Clark* might be a good title for another thesis – or another chapter of a future work.

²⁶ See: G. Matta-Clark, C. Diserens, T. E. Crow, J. R. Kirshner, and C. Kravagna. *Gordon Matta-Clark*: Phaidon, 2003, p. 194.

- a) The body pretends that gravity comes from another side and the resulting footage is rotated accordingly.²⁷
- b) The recording camera is mounted on a device that makes it constantly rotate and the body follows the movement by pretending that gravity rotates according to the camera as well.²⁸
- c) In the case in which the body does not pretend gravity or follow the camera's moves, a forceful link of the body to the medium film can be achieved by moving the projecting device so as to fix the body in the frame. In this case, the relation between the acted body and the projector replaces the relation between the acting body and the camera.²⁹

These examples visualise and make possible the experience of an understanding of knowledge as *touching*. As the body relates to the camera, being in touch, so the writing subject relates to the written/read objects of her or his text. Texts exert forces on the reader. These are like gravitational forces, and to submit to the reading of a text is like submitting to the gravitational forces of a mass.

The simulations of bodily comportments in the cinematographic instances, as described above, submitted to gravitational forces that do not exist, produce gestures that seem comical, comparable to the serious comedies of Buster Keaton. This comic surplus affect emerges from the impossibility of opposing, eliminating, or escaping the effects of affectless forces. To adapt the initial quotation from Bataille to our current condition, in times when it seems increasingly impossible to overturn things, the only option is to become comical by preparing to do so. In the cinematographic instances this comic aspect shows in the clumsiness of the body with regard to forces that are actually inexistent.

What for the spectator of the cinematographic instances appears as the affects resulting from the visual simulation of non-existent forces, which are then reflected and made sense of by the viewer, finds an analogy for the reader of this text in a warning. *Caveat lector*, this text may deceive you precisely not because it wants to deceive but because it wants not to deceive. It does not attempt to construct an argument, desiring only to get in touch with material – staying in touch with itself.

²⁷ See: i.e. *Unoccupied Territories II*: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391962>

²⁸ See: i.e. *Lascaux V (or The Birth of Art)*: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=392003>

²⁹ See i.e. *Chauvet III (or the Cave of Forgotten Dreams)*: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-work?work=391999>

Au Lecteur.

5 *

Figure 5 Hardliz, R., and M. Beutler, *may be thinking*, inverted preface of Michel de Montaigne's *Essays* used for the invitation card for five public conversations that included three persons, three bottles of Bordeaux wine, and excluded the public, print, 2012



Figure 6 Hardliz, R., J. Orfei, *Are you here for the gravity?*, interior of Studiolo during construction showing the marquetry perspective, Olten, 2013, photo: Hans Grob, 2013



Figure 7 Hardliz, R., J. Orfei, *Are you here for the gravity?*, Studiolo in the context of the school building it portrays inside, Olten, 2013, photo: Hans Grob, 2013

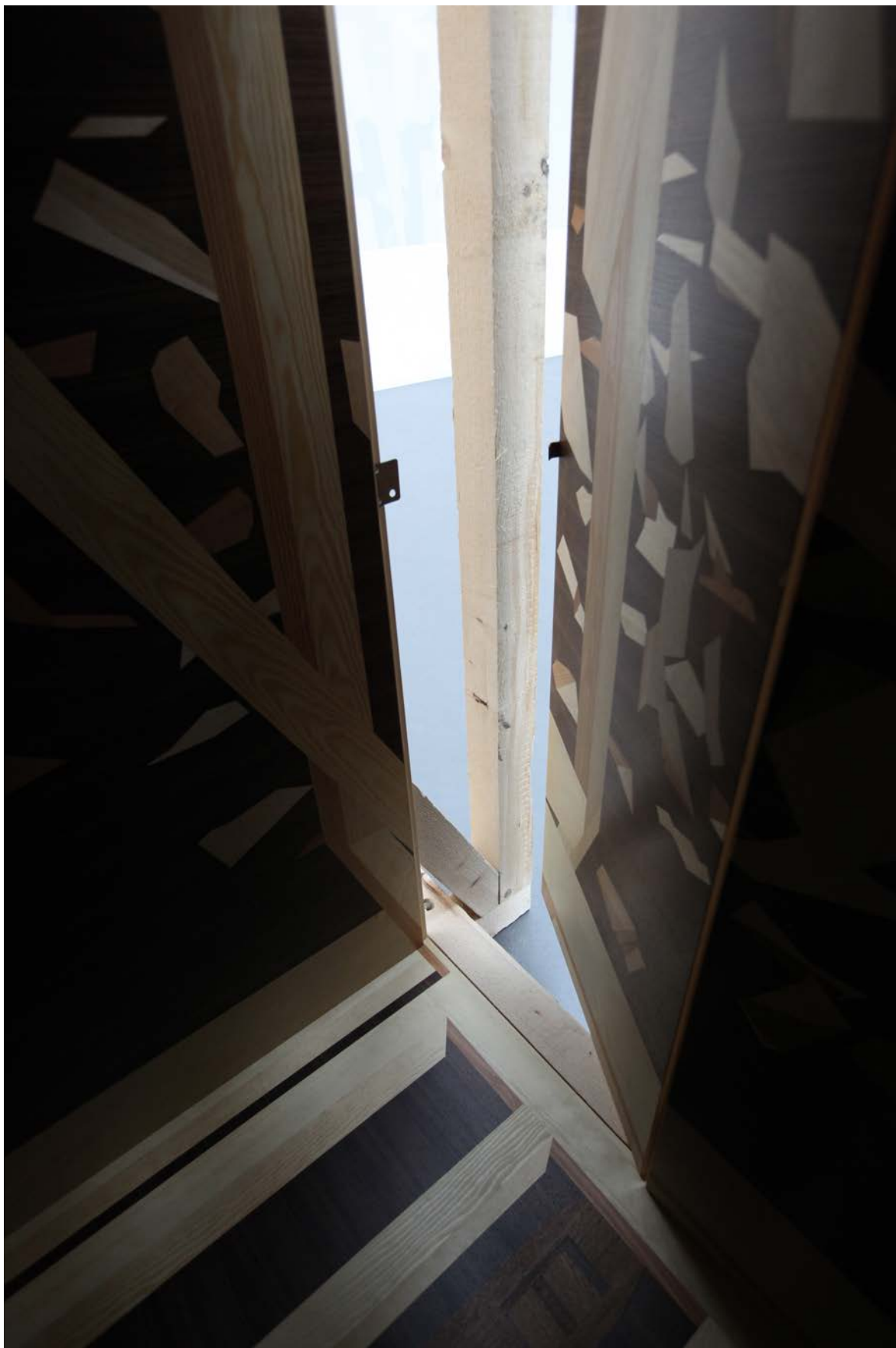


Figure 8 Hardliz, R., J. Orfei, *Are you here for the gravity?*, Studiolo interior showing representation of real construction in the marquetry, Olten, 2013, photo: Hans Grob, 2013



Figure 9 Hardliz, R., *Exit Strategy (Bourbaki)*, drilling the logo of Kunsthalle Luzern into the sidewalk refilling it with asphalt, Luzern, 2011, photo: Beate Engel, 2011



Figure 10 Hardliz, R., *Dendriform*, unpacking the 1:4 schale replica of a Frank Lloyd Wright prototype mushroom column, Sofia, 2013, photo: Ina Mertens, 2013



Figure 11 Hardliz, R., *Satellite of Love*, Reconstruction of an anonymous student's conceptual model of Aldo Rossi's 'Monumento alla Resistenza' in scale 1:1, Berne, 2011, digital collage of project: the author, 2014

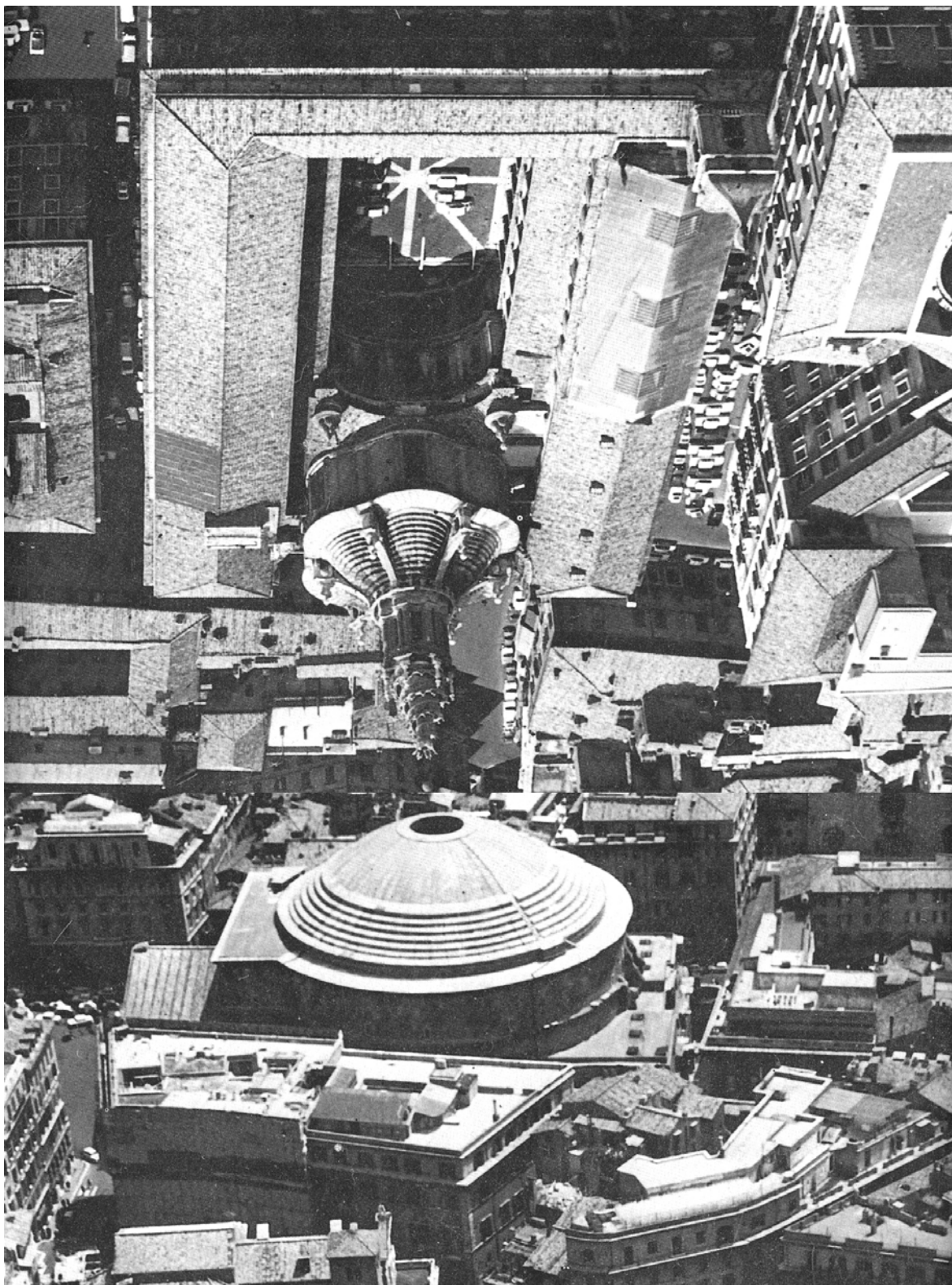
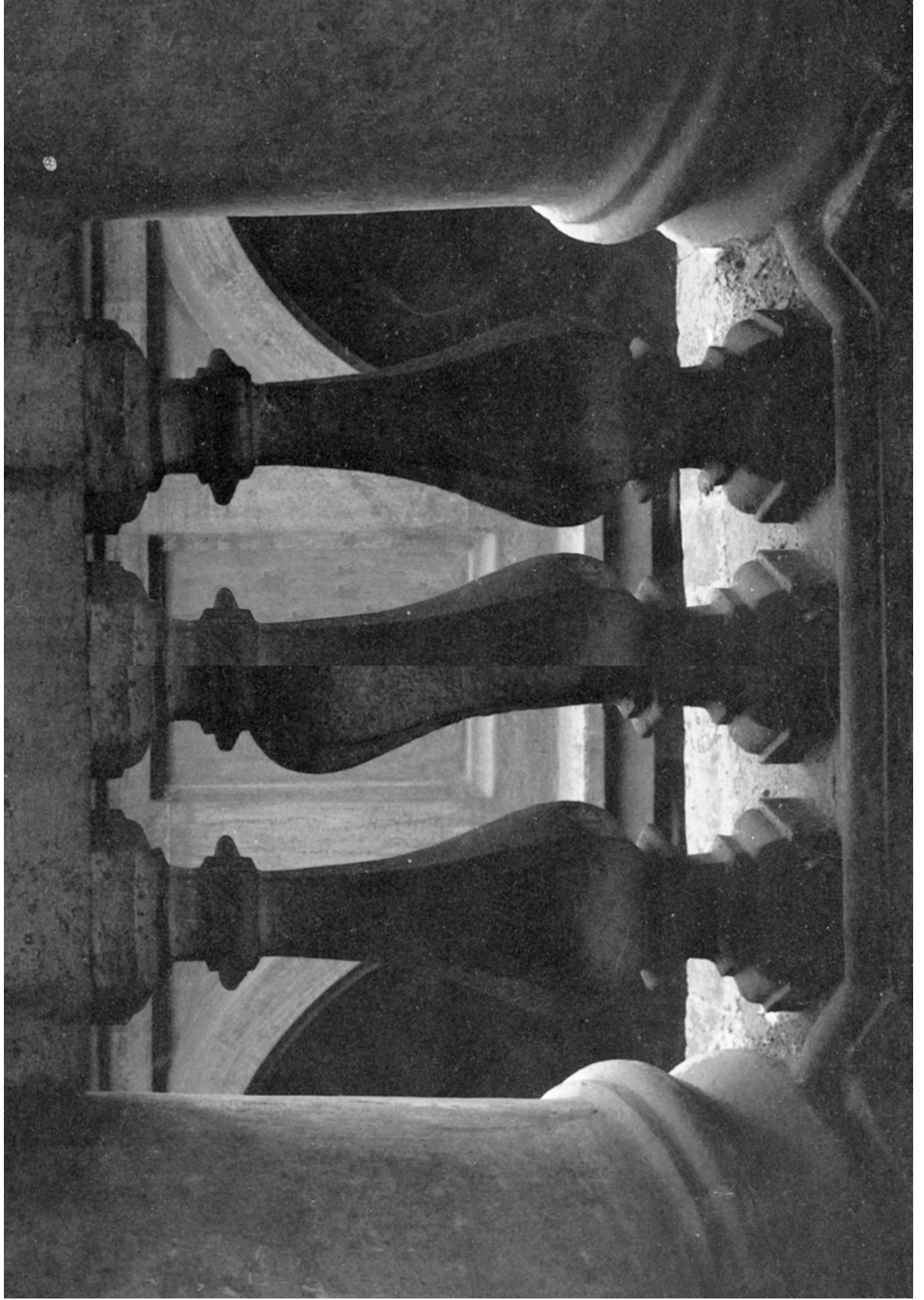


Figure 12 Hardliz, R., a reproduction of Borromini's Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza found in Bruno Zevi's *Pretesti di critica architettonica* (1983, 134) is cut and reassembled, collage, 2012



Figure 13 Hardlitz,
R., J. Orfei, *Are you here
for the gravity?*, Studiolo
view of the ceiling and
top light, Olten, 2013,
photo: Hans Grob, 2013

Figure 14 Hardlitz,
R., a photo of Borromini's
balusters in the courtyard
of San Carlo alle Quattro
Fontane is cut,
reassembled, and cleaned,
digital collage, 2012

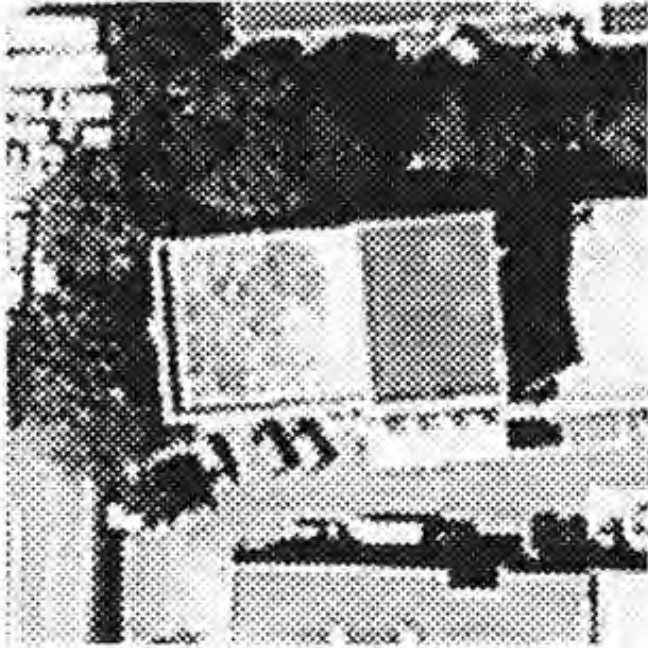


Ankündigung

24. November 2011, 18 Uhr

Ronny Hardliz lädt Václav
Požárek und Martin Beutler
zur Vorbesprechung eines
Gesprächs ein.

(Dies ist keine Einladung)

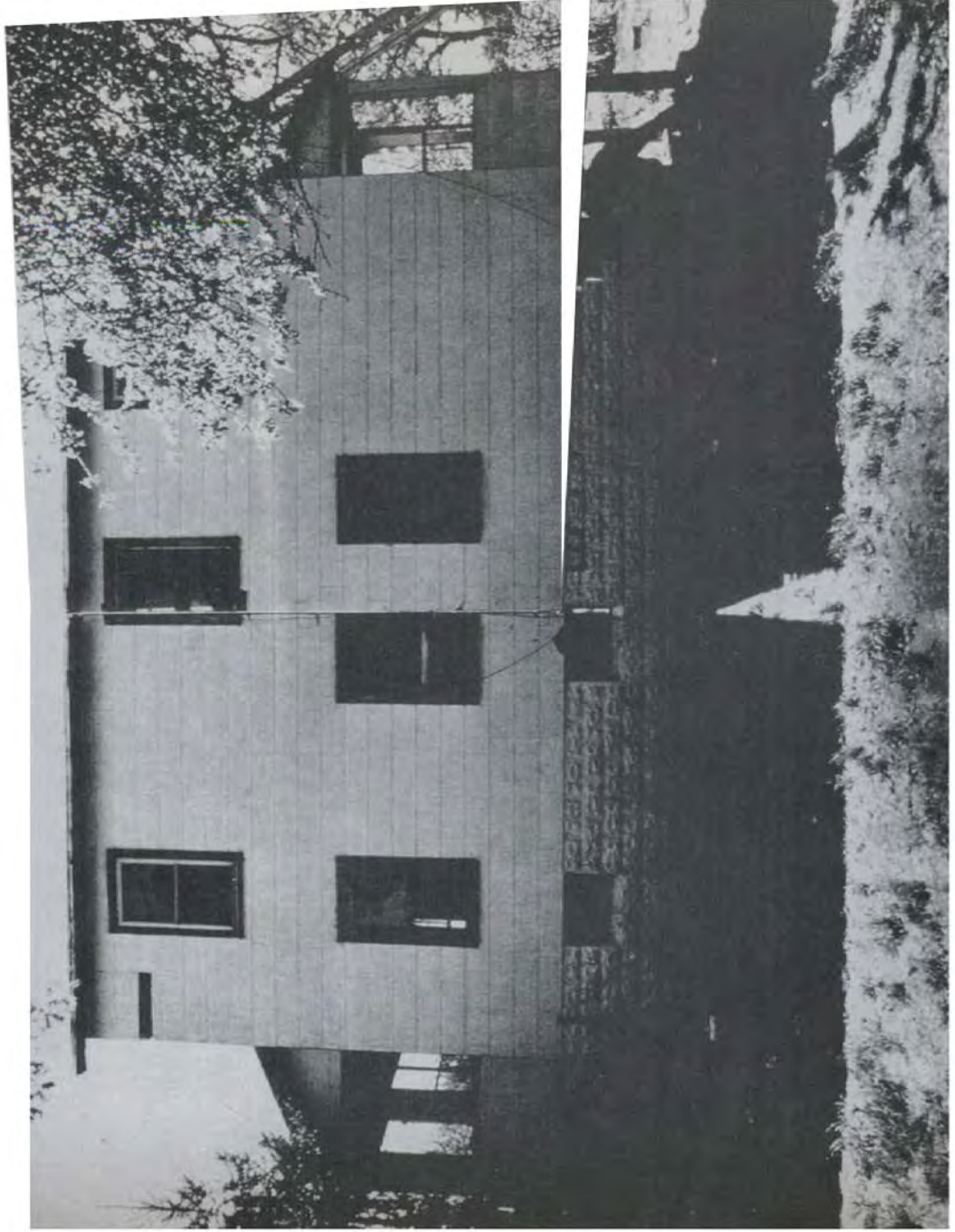


Projekt Da

Ziegelackerstrasse 11a, 3007 Bern

Figure 15 Ronny Hardliz,
R., announcement (not
invitation) of a
preliminary discussion
of a discussion, card

Figure 16 Hardliz, R., a reproduction of Matta-Clark's *Splitting* found in Pamela M. Lee's *Object to be Destroyed* is cut and reassembled so as to fix the cut, collage, 2012



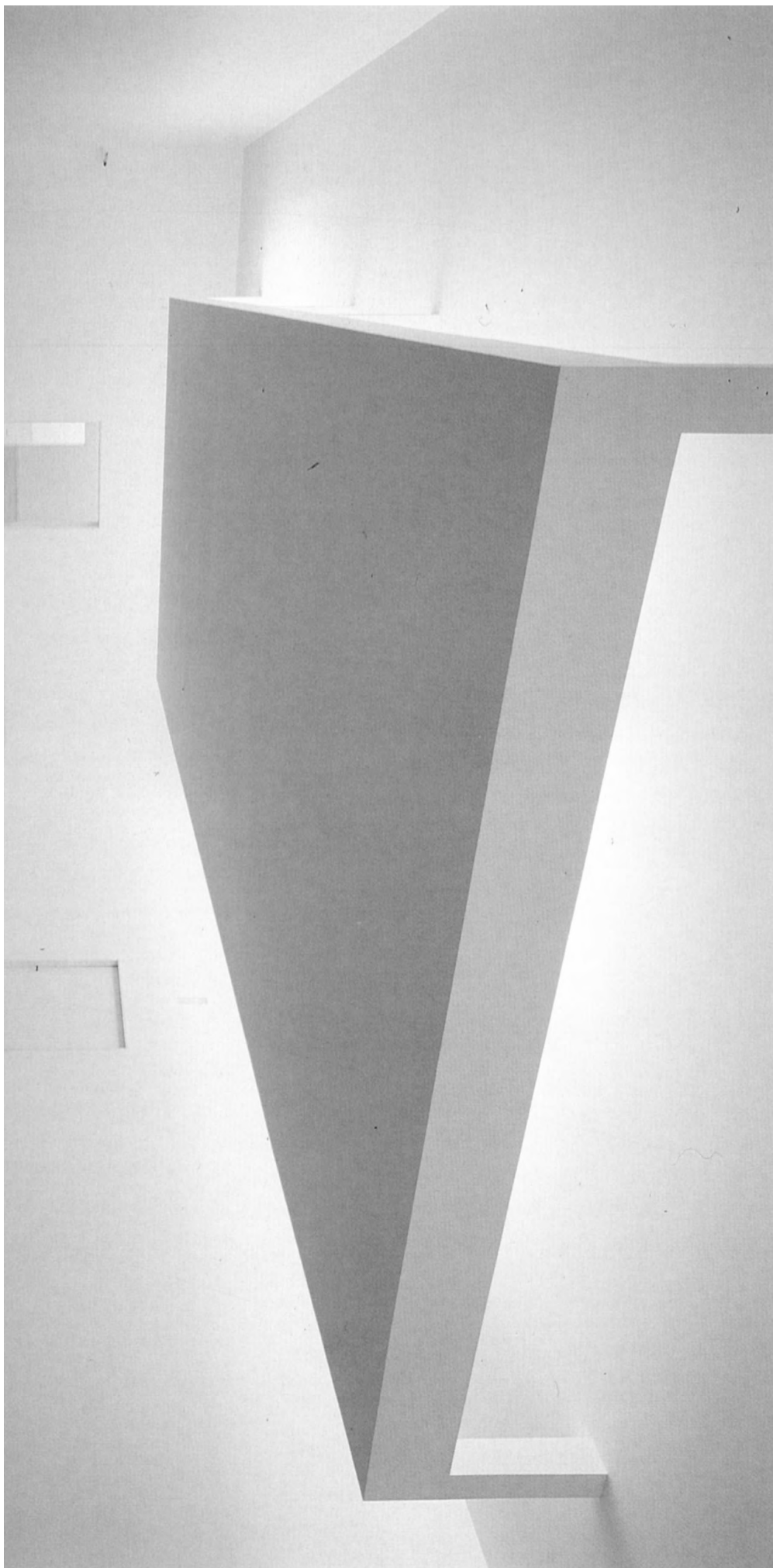


Figure 17 Hardlitz, R., a photo of Alvaro Siza's ceiling at Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea in Santiago de Compostela is turned upside down, collage, 2012

Figure 18 Hardliz, R.,
J. Orfei, *Shift Work Berne*
Jura, four round areas of
floor covering in front of
four art institutions were
cut out, shifted, and
reinstalled in one of the
other areas, performative
art installation, 2011, photos:
Jürg Orfei, 2011

ShiftWork Berne Jura

Dokumentation der verschobenen Landpunkte



Biel
im Hinterhof des Centre ParsquArt
Kies von Moutier
Asphalt nach Langenthal



Langenthal
vor der Treppe zum Kunsthhaus
Asphalt von Biel
Kopfsteinpflaster nach Bern



Bern
in der Nordostecke des Progrhofes
Kopfsteinpflaster von Langenthal
Marmor nach Moutier



Moutier
im Hof des Musée Jurassien des Arts
Marmor von Bern
Kies nach Biel



HARDLIZ & ORFEI



Figure 19 Hardliz, R., cobblestones in front of the Arnolfini were brought to the AHRA conference on 'transgression, Bristol, 2013, photo: the author, 2013



Figure 20 Hardliz, R., a circular hole was melted in the snow with a hair dryer leaving another circle made of footsteps, Davos, 2014, photos: Sara Cristensen Blair, 2014



The many interrelations with technocracy give reason to suspect that the principle of construction remains aesthetically obedient to the administered world; but it may terminate in a yet unknown aesthetic form, whose rational organization might point to the abolition of all categories of administration along with their reflexes in art.

(Adorno 2015, 305)

ARCHITECTURE: A VOIDING

Non-Construction

Burning Houses, Reopening Holes

Initially, it was intended that this trip would bring me to several locations related to Bataille, in particular those which possibly served as reference for his film scenario *La maison brûlée*, (1974, n° 49), a unique text from 1944,³⁰ the only scenario for a film by Bataille.³¹ In the last

³⁰ It has never been realised, only, as Helga Finter speculates, in parts, taken up by Jean Luc Godard in *Nouvelle Vague* thus making Godard a ‘spiritual heir’ of Bataille ‘posing the question of the impossible, of (re-)presentability, of ecstasy’. (2015, 105; own translation)

paragraph of *The Man without Content* Agamben evokes the architectural metaphor of the ‘burning house’ as the equivalent for art’s ‘original project’:

According to the principle by which it is only in the burning house that the fundamental architectural problem becomes visible for the first time, art, at the furthest point of its destiny, makes visible its original project. (1999b, 115)

This paragraph concludes with a juxtaposition of Benjamin’s reflection on the *Angelus Novus* by Paul Klee as the ‘angel of history’³² and Albrecht Dürer’s *Melancholia I* interpreted by Agamben as the ‘angel of aesthetics’, both ‘inseparable’ in their condition of being caught in the ‘conflict between old and new’. (112) Agamben proposes, following Benjamin, an interpretation of Franz Kafka’s writing as an inversion of

³² There are ‘Notes for a Film’ published in *The Cradle of Humanity, Prehistoric Art and Culture* (Bataille 2009, 179–85), which are just preliminary notes indicating some impressions and a sequence, far from a script that could be used for realization. However, since these notes touch upon prehistory, they might serve as an entry point for further filmic research and work related to the issues discussed here and later in the thesis. In fact these notes, in the rough and somewhat poetic state in which they are, seem like an adequate response to the unknowables of both prehistoric times and practices discussed here.

³³ See also Benjamin’s ninth of the “Theses on the Philosophy of History”, in which ‘This storm [of progress] irresistibly propels him [the “Angelus Novus” as the angel of history] into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward’. (2007a, 257–8)

truth and transmissibility, sacrificing truth rather than transmissibility (or tradition) for an art that ‘could become transmission of the act of transmission’. (114) If the destiny of art is the ‘redemption [of] the past [as its] inability to die [...] in the museum of aesthetics’, (110) then the catastrophe of the total destruction of its truth is art’s furthest point from its destiny. Here, and only after the destruction of truth, ‘its original project’ becomes ‘visible’. (115) Kafka’s writings are at art’s furthest point from its destiny because they do not arrest and exhibit a past, a truth, or an experience aesthetically; they liquefy life – the author’s life and the reader-as-author’s life – by constantly destroying the text’s truth value through the creative process of writing.

The metaphor of the burning house may draw on Benjamin’s arguments concerning the destiny of Jews. Benjamin uses the architectural metaphor in order to illustrate his position against a Jewish State. ‘[The East European Jews] have as little occasion to reflect on where they will end up as a man fleeing a burning house’.³³

³³ Quotation from Benjamin’s letter to Ludwig Strauss, 11 September 1912, as quoted and probably translated by Anson Rabinbach in: Rabinbach 1985, 94. Rabinbach only notes that ‘The subsequent citations and page numbers are from photocopies of the originals and not from the published [German] versions’ by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, who have

Agamben may also be drawing on Bataille's interpretation of architecture and its inadequacy as a model for art. Bataille's first article in the dictionary *Documents* published in 1929 is dedicated to architecture.³⁴ 'Architecture [as] the expression of the very soul of societies' is, for Bataille, expression of ruling authority and ideology (Hollier 1992, 46).³⁵ When architectural composition (or architectural metaphor) is used and expressed in other fields it always carries with it the violence of human domination and authority. For Bataille, the disappearance of academic construction in painting, the abolition of its architectural skeleton means an opening to societal instability:

If one attacks architecture [...] one is, as it were, attacking man [...] denouncing the inadequacy of human predominance'. (53-4)

Hollier takes 'the title of his [Bataille's] first published text [...] *Notre-Dame de Rheims*' (1992, 14) to claim that Bataille begins with architecture: 'It is a meditation [...] on the cathedral'. (14) Bataille's text, written *circa* 1918, is followed by 'ten years of silence, at the end of which this text will be buried in silence'. (15) Bataille's first writings after this silence,

partially published the four letters from Benjamin to Strauss, except this one. (90, note 45)

³⁴ See Hollier 1992, 46-56.

³⁵ Translation by Betsy Wing from Bataille's *Oeuvre Complète*. (1971-88, 1:171-2)

'*Histoire de l'oeil, L'Anus solaire*, the text "Amérique disparue", and the first published articles in *Documents*' (15) allow '[reading] in this silence the rupture through which Bataille's writing was produced'. (15) Hollier proposes that 'All of Bataille's writing would be aimed at the destruction of this cathedral, [...] against the veiled ideological necessity controlling [this text], [...] which makes writing only possible *afterward* and against this text, against the oppressive architecture of constructive values'. (15) Hollier claims that this 'vast ideological system [is] symbolized and maintained by architecture' and 'In order to loosen the structure that is hierarchical and at the same time creates hierarchy, Bataille will introduce the play of writing'. (23) Hollier writes that for Bataille:

Writing in this sense would be a profoundly antiarchitectural gesture, a *nonconstructive* gesture, one that, on the contrary, undermines and destroys everything whose existence depends on edifying pretensions. (23; my emphasis)

This sounds like my method, to which in the context of a Ph.D. should be added that the edification of the pretention of claiming original knowledge needs to be destroyed as well. Hollier's conclusion that 'it is a question of reopening a hole, remarking a hollow, a cave once more,' referring to architecture as the works of which 'plugged up' these holes, (23) echoes my practice.

Bataille writes first on architecture, about a building ‘that for one to have lived one has to have seen this light glowing’. (16) In 1914 ‘on September 19 shells tore through, killing children, women, and old people; fire crackled and raged from street to street; houses collapsed; people died, crushed by the rubble, burned alive. Then the Germans set the cathedral on fire’. (17)

Hollier reads this text inversely. Bataille’s turn against the ideologies symbolised in architecture is driven by his turn against religion and against the domination of the father, against domination in general. In 1914 Bataille uses images of cruelty generating sparks of national hope, i.e. by saying that ‘there is one light stronger than death: France’ (18), to tell ‘some youths of the Haute-Auvergne’ (15) that they ‘are the ones from whom she [the cathedral] awaits renewal’. (18) From the perspective of the later Bataille we must understand that to see ‘the cathedral burn’ and to have ‘the vision [...] of a wound scarring the whole world’ *promises* ‘tearing apart all that used to make our life and our happiness’, (17) promising the transgression of ideological form.

Dispossession of Discourse

In Bataille there is hope (in art).³⁶ In Kafka there is none (in art).³⁷ What we may learn from both is that life, in order to be lived, has to consume itself, to be lit by fire, to be liquefied. The same is true for academic discourse if it is not to be ‘deployed with complete assurance in a realm over which it has taken possession, one it has inventoried after first closing it off, to make sure it is absolutely safe’. (23) Discourse must be saved from possession by dispossessing it from its authors. Rather than alienating us as dismembered truth parts, which escape from the past in order to get stuck in a constructed present, quotations should elide the present and restore a tradition, one that does not transmit truths, but transmission itself. Consequently, quotations lose their relation to their authors and could, as Benjamin attempted, appear without quotation marks. Quotation marks, although they do persist in this text for reasons

³⁶ In *Prehistoric Painting: Lascaux or the Birth of Art* Georges Bataille describes the genesis of art as being related to man’s experience of his own death. This experience of death leads to prohibitions. Overstepping these prohibitions in games is the birth not just of art but also of man himself as *Homo ludens* rather than *Homo sapiens*. Death, and possibly even humanity’s death, is therefore, indirectly, at the origin of art’s genesis. See Bataille 1980.

³⁷ That is to say, only in art there is a particular *non-hope*.

of academic conventions, are mere technical traces. They signal an origin of words or transmissibility and not meaning or truth.

To save a discourse means to save it from its monstrosity of authoritarian truth. With regard to architecture, it is not enough to replace the architectural metaphor with a metaphor of destroyed architecture. What is needed is to destroy the architectural metaphor, to destroy the metaphorical use of architecture in other domains and replace it with an architectural use. Writing achieves an architectural meaning and the architectural metaphor (as architecturability) is saved for architecture itself.

We may then comprehend the burning house not as anti-architectural but as the extreme condition of an architecture that constantly consumes and is being consumed, thus revealing its originality. It reflects the use value of architecture Benjamin describes in his *Work of Art* essay and its political potential for the art of cinema: absent-minded examination. In this mode of appropriation we are consumed by an architecture over which ideology has lost control we have lost that control, too but it is a critical mode of being consumed.

Benjamin historically situates his conception of a 'politicized art' as a response to fascism in the masses, both in the technical

means of mass production and in the masses of the public mobilised by them. Since gravitational fields are generated by masses, I argue that the shifts, generations or destructions of gravities are of vital importance for politicised art.³⁸ For Benjamin it is through (and in) film that masses can be mobilised in order to 'tackle the most difficult and most important tasks' of 'the turning points of history'. (2007a, 240) The tasks of turning points of history and the mobilised masses produce mutually influential gravitational forces and shifts or, literally, turnings around points in gravitational fields.

The political potentials both of architecture and film, their gravitational forces, are constituted through diverted masses and distracted modes of apperception. Benjamin touches an originality that is able to counter the 'rendering aesthetic' of politics: politicizing art as a response of Communism. (2007a, 242)

Bataille's writing about art by means of opposing architecture, and Benjamin's writing about an art politicised through architecture, seem to oppose each other. *What if, rather, they relate to each other by*

³⁸ A comparison with Krakauer's meaning and function of mass in *The Mass Ornament* is of interest but not in the scope of this research, though it may provide a topic for further investigations.

using identical conceptions of architecture, although the first to denounce the ideological pretensions of architecture (in order to transcend it) and the second to praise the material (and potentially transcending) properties of architecture?³⁰ In order to test if Bataille and Benjamin oppose each other I introduce a *tertium non datur*.

Constructed Construction

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, like Bataille, begins with architecture. According to Hegel 'architecture confronts us as the beginning of art'. (2010, 624) For Hegel architecture does so not only on a conceptual level as particularly suited for dealing with questions of art, 'on the contrary, it must equally clearly be seen as the art coming first in the existence of art in the world,' that is to say, in historical terms. (630) However, Hegel

³⁰ This relation is not dissimilar to that between Douglas Spencer and Philip Ursprung, both using identical descriptions of architecture – the first to denounce the architecture of neo-liberalism and the second to praise an architecture of what I think we could call *trans-neo-liberalism*. See discussion of their work below in this chapter.

understands architecture as construction and places such construction as the origin at the beginning of an aesthetic theory, which he then constructs. As Hollier notes, in reality this 'origin is still lacking at the beginning. And Hegel will apply himself more to the correction of this lack than to the description of architecture', (1992, 5) knowing that 'his entire construction, the entire edifice of his *Aesthetics*, depends on it'. (5) This correction remains uncertain because it depends on 'independent architecture'. (Hegel 2010, 653) Such independence is problematic for Hollier, 'For it is hard to conceive of a building exempt from utilitarian space, one whose only purpose is aesthetic'. (8)

Notwithstanding how 'awkward' (5) Hegel's discourse on the beginnings of art may be, it underlines his point of *Aufhebung*, in which every moment both annihilates and saves the preceding one, independently from its truth-value. The Hegelian edifice may be an exemplary gesture of a construction constructed purely on the possibility of construction. It defines art as an independent construction and by constructing *Aesthetics* as an independent construction, proves it. Of course such a proof is elliptical, proving nothing but its independence from reality. Nevertheless, in its logic and consistency it demonstrates an aesthetic theory, from which the discourse on art, or rather the discourse *as* art can appear as a logic conclusion.

What I am interested in here is not the lack of a 'true' origin in Hegel's edifice, one identical with a factual beginning, but its very conclusiveness. By terminating the successive suspension of the 'particular arts' (architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry) in Hegel's own work, *Aesthetics*, 'art transcends itself and becomes prose'. (Hegel 2010, 89) In other words, art itself is dead. It is death as the *end* of art, as opposed to death as the *origin* of art, which fundamentally opposes Bataille to Hegel. The lack of an origin in Hegel's work is not a lack at all; on the contrary, it is its very force, since only the lack of an origin, linking it to a tradition, allows it to have a definite conclusion, thus disconnecting it from tradition: an independent art work.

The seeming independence in Bataille's notion of art is, in contrast to Hegel, driven to transgress the prohibitions imposed on society by the origin of the experience of death. Transgression is not an end, but a return to death as an origin. In economical terms, Hegel's suspension of a moment for the sake of a new one corresponds with the principle of 'creative destruction,' claimed in the early twentieth century as one of the driving principles of capitalism by the economist Joseph A. Schumpeter (2013, 81-6). Its contrary, 'destructive creation' consequently has to be called one of the driving principles of anti-capitalism. This becomes clear in Bataille's book on political economy,

The Accursed Share, where he clarifies his 'notion of a "general economy" in which the "expenditure" (the "consumption") of wealth, rather than production, [is] the primary object'. (2013, 9) While 'creative destruction' is a destruction that has creation, or production, as its primary object, 'destructive creation' is a creation that has destruction, or expenditure/consumption, as its objective. Put in a formula: Whereas Hegel has destroyed art in order to produce himself (nothing but himself), and the means of this production can be called 'construction,' Bataille has created art in order to expend himself (nothing but himself), and the means of this expenditure can be called 'non-construction.'

With his article against architecture in *Documents* and his claim of 'the birth of art' in 'prehistoric painting', Bataille situates the origin of art both explicitly not in architecture and thus implicitly against Hegel.

Benjamin, for his part, read Hegel 'under the influence of [Theodor W.] Adorno and [Berthold] Brecht [...] during the elaboration of the *Arcades Project*' (Palmier 2009, 61; own translation), with the aim of overcoming both Hegelian and Marxian theory in a new epistemology. Adorno builds his critique of Hegelian construction on both Benjamin's technique of montage used in the *Arcades Project* and on 'the products of mass culture in which profit is hidden and whose trace they bare even

in supposedly socialist countries'. (Adorno 2015, 76) Adorno thus hints at Brecht, who 'did in fact value *Song*-style above atonality and twelve-tone technique, which was for him suspiciously romantic in its expressiveness'. (76) But Adorno also hints at Benjamin in his critique of the *Work of Art* essay, writing that:

The failure of Benjamin's grandly conceived theory of reproduction remains that its bipolar categories make it impossible to distinguish between a conception of art that is free of ideology to its core and the misuse of aesthetic rationality for mass exploitation and mass domination, a possibility he hardly touches upon. (2015, 77)

Benjamin does not, I would argue against Adorno, refer to 'aesthetic rationality' as a tool. Nor does he claim to provide a conception of art that is unrelated to ideology. Rather he is concerned with the pre- or post-rational material conditions of mass production and consumption and an art that is able to emancipate from ideological conditions. He appears to suggest a politicized use of aesthetic rationality diametrically opposed to Adorno's interpretation: that is to say, a misuse of fascist aesthetic mass rationality for a coming to terms with the present by artistic mass experience.

Adorno's reasoning, according to which 'it is the fatality of all contemporary art that it is contaminated by the untruth of the ruling

totality', (2015, 77) is alarmingly applicable to contemporary art. His claim, however, that 'construction is currently the only possible form that the rational element in the artwork can take' (77) is precisely what I am trying to question by setting up the notion of non-construction with the help of Benjamin's concept of 'tactile appropriation'.

Adorno claims that 'it counts among the most profound insights of Hegel's *Aesthetics* that long before constructivism it recognized this truly dialectical relation and located the subjective success of the artwork in the disappearance of the subject in the artwork'. (78) However, only because art produces a contradictory 'polemical intervention of the subject in subjective reason by a surplus of the subject's own manifestation beyond that in which it wants to negate itself', (79) according to Adorno, 'can art somehow still survive'. (79)

In Benjamin's conception of the artwork, however, the subject does not appear by means of a surplus of subjectivity as in a Hegelian construction in which subjectivity is hidden rather than eliminated from the start. The subject appears by elimination of the artwork as a contemplated object. Adorno is certainly right when he fears that the artwork, when 'totally objectified, [...] becomes a mere fact and is annulled as art'. (83) I would claim that Benjamin's conception of art *qua*

architecture, which could be understood as an objectification, does not put an end to art, but offers precisely the alternative ‘to transform its very concept’, (83) which Adorno was unable to provide.

From Conceptual Architecture to a Concept of Architecture

Just as conceptual art is not the same as having a concept of art, the conceptual use of architecture in philosophy is not the same as having a concept of architecture in philosophy.⁴⁰ While Hegel has had a constructive concept of architecture and applied it for the construction of his philosophy, Benjamin has a non-constructive concept of

⁴⁰ Compare with Deleuze’s search for a concept of difference. For Deleuze, ‘with Aristotle, philosophy was able to provide itself with an organic representation of difference, with Gouffier Wilhelm Leibniz and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel an organic representation: it has not, for all that, reached difference in itself’. (2012b, xiv) Deleuze explains in his preface to the English edition of *Difference and Repetition* that ‘they had introduced difference into the identity of the concept, they had put difference in the concept itself, thereby reaching a conceptual difference, but not a concept of difference’. (xiii)

architecture and does *not* apply it to his philosophy, to which he applies a concept of philosophy.

To have a non-constructive concept of architecture implies that architectural construction remains in the medium of architecture. Architecture is inapplicable to philosophy. However, as medium, or language, it is translatable. There is a translation between the medium of architecture, its language (which is the language of building as both activity and object), and the medium of philosophy, its language (which is the language of concepts). In this sense Benjamin’s philosophy is non-constructive, not in an application of a conceptual architecture to philosophy (neither as if philosophy were constructed nor as if it were non-constructed) but in the *use* (or *consumption*, which is the proximity to Bataille) of a concept of architecture as non-constructive for philosophical purposes. To have a concept of architecture as non-constructive does not mean to dispense with construction in architecture. Rather it means to propose its use-value and its inherent consummation ‘by a collectivity in a state of distraction’. (Benjamin 2007a, 239)

Equally, the architectural in my practice should not be mistaken as a conceptual use of architecture in art practice. Rather, it addresses

(or researches) the concept of architecture in art practice. It is not mistaken to associate this art practice with destruction as long as destruction is not the means but the end: an end never reached. Nevertheless, its means is not construction, which appears only as an effect of a materialist practice that uses and consumes the material at its disposal. In as much as the means of this art practice is *not* construction with an (open) end in destruction, the *ethos* or use of this practice is non-constructive.

Habitual Origins of Art

Bataille may have been right to situate the ‘birth of art’ in prehistoric painting and ‘against architecture’. It is a beginning that begins with us, *homo sapiens*. Our first *construction* was death, or rather, ‘man achieves awareness of death, and therewith wraps it in prohibitions’. (Bataille 1980, 29) Transgression of the prohibitions generated by this construction, according to Bataille, is the play of art. It is what defines

the human not as *Homo sapiens* but as *Homo ludens*.⁴ This play, opposing construction, is also against the constructive nature of man, whose first construction was the awareness of death. In opposition to construction, however, Bataille puts architecture first.

Benjamin does not put architecture first. Instead, he stresses architecture’s imperishability compared with other art forms and the ‘laws of its perception’, (2007a, 239) which might be related to the fact that ‘the human need for shelter is lasting’. (240) Architecture’s birthright is qualitative, not chronological. Benjamin defines an aesthetic quality of architecture as art that differs from other art forms, rooted not in play but in the need for shelter. It is, in a way, bringing art *home*. This home has nothing to do with construction. Construction, as with Bataille, is the birth of art as a transgression of prohibitions

⁴ It should be noted here that Carolus Linnaeus in the first nine editions of his *Systema naturae* does not only place *Homo* in row with, rather than above, the primates, but he also refrains from giving ‘any specific identifying characteristic next to the generic name *Homo*, only the old philosophical adage: *nosce te ipsum* [know yourself]’. (Agamben 2004, 25) Giorgio Agamben suggests that even the addition *sapiens* from the tenth edition onwards ‘assigns not a given, but rather an imperative as a specific difference’. (25)

towards death. Art is the playful restaging and thus the arrest of the awareness of death.⁴²

Benjamin brings down art from its original architectonics of composition to its architectural originality of habit. This originality may not yet be art, but without it there is no art. Benjamin's achievement with regard to the technical origin of an art of masses is that art can exist in a habitual environment. Art, even though it may be a block of sensations,

⁴² Deleuze and Felix Guattari write that 'art preserves', (1994, 163) Immanuel Kant writes: 'By an architectonic I understand the art of systems'. (1998, 691) For Deleuze and Guattari 'art begins not with flesh but with the house. That is why architecture is the first of the arts'. (1994, 186) It is not only the technical construction that makes architecture the first art: '[A] work of art is never produced by or for the sake of technique', they claim. (192) Although it is hard to believe that Deleuze and Guattari would claim, like Kant, that 'a schema that is not outlined in accordance with an idea, i.e., from the chief end of reason, but empirically, in accordance with aims occurring contingently (whose number one cannot know in advance), yields *technical* unity, but that which arises only in consequence of an idea (where reason provides the ends *a priori* and does not await them empirically) grounds *architectonic* unity', (Kant 1998, 692) in their writing they nevertheless produce a rational *a priori*. They replace the human brain with 'microbrains', with 'an inorganic life of things': 'Even when one is a rat, it is through contemplation that one "contracts" a habit'. (Deleuze *et al.* 1994, 213) Deleuze and Guattari distance themselves from the priority of 'an Idea that acts, but is not' (Kant) in favour of the priority of 'a force that is but does not act', (Leibniz) 'because the contraction that preserves is always in a state of detachment in relation to action or even to movement and appears as a pure contemplation without knowledge'. (1994, 213) It forms a habit.

does not have to appear as such. Habitual art, researching art, rather functions as *blockbuster*: it explodes when least expected.

The cave, the hole, is where the two arts and the two architectures of Bataille and Benjamin meet. The cave, the first refuge of 'the human [in] need of shelter' is the first architecture, which 'has never been idle'. (Benjamin 2007a, 240) This *never* is absolute and exceeds humanity. Art has always been there, even without the human, in contemplations without knowledge, in contraction, in touch, in theory, in theatre: hidden. In the cave the artwork is exposed but at the same time it is hidden. 'The elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow men, but in the main it was meant for the spirits', writes Benjamin, concluding: 'Today the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden'. (225) Today the exhibition value of the artwork, as commodity, is mistaken as its artistic function. 'By the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental'. (225)

While we move through the cave, with a flickering lamp in our hand, the animal depictions on the walls move with us. Inside this pre-constructive architecture we experience the first cinematography of humanity, confirmed by successions and juxtapositions of representations of animal movements.⁴³ As in comics, bulls have eight legs in different states of pace, or the neck of a deer is depicted in different states of swimming when crossing a river. How Bataille and Benjamin ‘coincide’ on prehistoric painting and cinematography, at least ‘theoretically’, is yet to be examined.⁴⁴ However, the coincidence of the moves of our eyes and the moves of the animals depicted on the walls, more than the depictions of the movements, recalls another kinetic art: theatre.

⁴³ Compare with Marc Azéma’s analysis of animal movements and the representation of animals in movement in prehistoric cave painting, the graphic conventions used for the representation of the pace the decomposition of movement by either superposition or juxtaposition of successive images, suggesting that kinetic and narrative figuration was already rooted in prehistoric painting. (2009) We will return to this point later in the thesis.

⁴⁴ Gerhard Rupp speaks of a ‘theoretical coincidence’ between Benjamin and Bataille for their ‘considerable’ theoretical ‘congeniality’, i.e. their interest in the subversive and anti-authoritarian potential of the non-rational, despite of the lack of reciprocal theoretical reference. (2007, 298) Rupp lends the term from Theodor W. Adorno who speaks of such a ‘theoretical coincidence’ between Benjamin and Ernst Bloch with regard to their concepts of commodities. (1974, 240)

When an actor engages absolutely with the movements of a camera this produces an effect more theatrical than cinematographic. Drawing on the ancient Greek theatre as the place where theory was staged, this recognition allows for a conjunction between the filmic documentation of research practice with another ancient Greek notion of theory not as knowledge, but as *touching*, as Agamben suggests when discussing Deleuze’s notion of ‘contemplation without knowledge’. (1999a, 239) Theory, in this sense, is never an actualised work, but the very moment of encounter – i.e. between the actor and the camera – as potential. This understanding of theory as potentiality is the base for comprehending architecture not just as space of encounter, but encounter itself as architectural. It is the very spatiality that encounter generates that is the root of architecture.

Criticality

Out of Neo-Liberalism

Spencer in an article on *Architectural Deleuzism*,⁴⁵ writes: ‘For many thinkers of the spatiality of contemporary capitalism [there is] a single organizational paradigm [of a] networked, landscaped, borderless and reprogrammable [space]’. (2011, 9) He goes on saying that this is ‘a space that functions [...] to mobilize the subject as a communicative and enterprising social actant, train[ing] the subject for a life of opportunistic networking [...] as a precarious and on-going exercise in the acquisition of contacts, the exchange of information and the pursuit of projects’. (9) Such a mobilisation, Spencer proposes, resembles the

⁴⁵ For an account of Spencer’s use of the term ‘Deleuzism’, a term ‘originally coined by Deleuze scholar Ian Buchanan’ in his essay ‘Desire and Ethics’, that is a method ‘seeking to affirm the creative appropriation of a body of thought for purposes unimagined by its original author’, see Spencer’s blog *The Spatial Register*: <https://spatialregister.wordpress.com/2015/08/26/preface-to-architectural-deleuzism/> (accessed August 16 2016).

“control society” forecast some time ago by Gilles Deleuze’. (9) Referring to Foucault’s neo-liberal governmentality, Spencer explains that this space ‘operat[es] through environmental controls and modulations, rather than the disciplinary maintenance of normative individual behaviour’. (9) In such a ‘post-disciplinary society’, Spencer writes that according to Deleuze, ‘the movement of “dividuals” is tracked and monitored across [its] transversal “smooth space”’. (9) For Spencer such a conception of space is not only the outcome of theoretical ‘models of complexity, self-organization and emergence’ (9) but is also being actively sustained by

a self-styled avant-garde in contemporary architecture claiming and legitimizing the emergence of this mode of spatiality as essentially progressive through its particular reading of the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. (9)

In *The New Spirit of Capitalism* an analysis of management and ‘its own preference for networked and “self-organized” modes of operation’ (Spencer 2011, 12) French sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello argue, writes Spencer, that ‘the orientation of contemporary managerial theories towards de-hierarchized and networked forms of organization originates, in fact, not in the production process, but precisely in a critique of capitalism which is then appropriated by capitalism’. (12) This

critique of capitalism was rooted in the 'repertoire of May 1968', (Boltanski *et al.* 2007, 97), which apparently draws on the conceptual formulations of Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Spencer argues that if this repertoire of May 1968 including its Deleuzian concepts 'ha[ve] already been subsumed to a neoliberal managerialism, then the proposition that these same formulations [of Deleuze and Guattari] are at the same time the best, and in fact the only, means by which architecture can pursue an emancipatory project are seriously undermined', (Spencer 2011, 20) concluding :

it is thus difficult to conceive of how any architecture which makes strategic allegiance with the market, and at the same time so vehemently disavows the practice of critique, can be 'advanced' or 'progressive' other than to the extent that it advances or progresses the cause of the generalization of the market form itself. (20)

There is a chain of subjugations: Deleuze and Guattari's analysis and philosophical concepts were subsumed by the emancipatory repertoire of May 1968, which then have been seized upon in management literature and made operative not against exploitation but on the contrary, 'placed in the service of forces whose destruction they were intended to hasten'. (Boltanski *et al.* 2007, 97)

This final managerial link in the chain, according to Spencer, is actually taken up and spatially realised in some architectural projects whilst the architects pretend working along Deleuze's liberating concepts.⁴⁶ Spencer argues, that their architectural work is not merely problematic in its 'strategic allegiance with the market', immersed in which the architects would naturally reproduce 'the market form itself', (9) but rather in their wilfully uncritical reading of the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. According to Spencer this reading, although 'filtering from the philosophers' corpus any trace of criticality', (9)

has not, though, renounced the political in this process, but rather reframed it as a matter of organization and affect [...] transcribing Deleuzian (or Deleuzoguattarian) concepts [...] into a prescriptive repertoire of formal manoeuvres. (9)

Comparing a text passage from Patrik Schumacher, the partner in practice of Zaha Hadid Architects, to a text passage in Deleuze's *Postscript on Control Societies*,⁴⁷ Spencer likens the transition Deleuze

⁴⁶ It is 'identifiable in the projects and discourse of practices such as Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), Foreign Office Architecture (FOA), Reiser + Umemoto, and Greg Lynn, for example'. (Spencer 2011, 9)

⁴⁷ Spencer refers to: Deleuze, G. 1995. 'Postscript on Control Societies', *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, pp. 178-9. New York: Columbia University Press;

describes from ‘spaces of enclosure’ typical for the disciplinary society to ‘a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point’ typical for the societies of control, on the one side, with the transition from ‘clearly bounded realms’ to ‘gradient vectors of transformation’ (12) in Schumacher’s text, on the other. Whilst both authors, Deleuze and Schumacher, give an ‘account of a transition from a striated to a smooth space’, (12) Spencer qualifies the political shift he detects between the two authors as ‘one from critique to valorization’; (12) from Deleuze’s warning to Schumacher’s affirmation. Spencer therefore concludes ‘this movement paradoxically turns Deleuze’s analysis of a nascent control mechanism into a prescription for its implementation’. (12)

Indeed, Deleuze has warned to ‘not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks’, (Deleuze 2012b, 176) and he cautions, with Guattari, to ‘never believe that a smooth space will save us’. (Deleuze *et al.* 2013, 581) While Spencer rightly deconstructs the discursive and built instantiations of ‘architectural Deleuzism’, it remains unclear if the subjugation of Deleuze’s critical analysis into managerial strategies is to be located in management itself or rather,

Schumacher, p. 2003. *Digital Hadid: Landscapes in Motion*, 19. Basel: Birkhäuser, date?

ironically, in the repertoire of May 1968. The concepts deemed liberating at the moment of ‘revolution’ might already have contained an inherent spark of managerial redundancy when applied uncritically.⁴⁸

The fact that Spencer does not offer alternatives, accounts for his own disregard of the critical potentials of Deleuze’s philosophy, though in different ways and for different reasons.

Generally, this observation casts a critical light on the reception of philosophical concepts in leftist philosophies and would require an analysis of the economical, political, societal, and cultural contingencies in which such academic discourses are being produced and practiced. Do they manage to ‘advance and progress’ academic discourses beyond ‘the cause of the generalization of the market form itself?’ (Spencer 2011, 18)

This is not to denounce Spencer’s merits in casting a clear light on the real dangers of ‘architectural Deleuzism’, particularly with regard to its claim of a ‘politics of pure affect’ through a ‘differential faciality’ that ‘accommodates [contemporary social reality’s] supposed post-linguistic turn’. (18) Spencer warns that ‘to posit a politics of pure affect is to propose that the contents of its expression cannot be grasped by

⁴⁸ See i.e. my discussion of the Hornsey Affair in the chapter *The Study*.

thought'. (19) In such a 'politics of pure affect' (19) and beyond language, he is convinced:

any distance between subject and political expression, and hence any space in which this might be reflected upon, conceptually or critically, through a shared language, is eliminated. (19)

Forget Deleuze Part One, Or *À la recherche de l'espace perdu*

There are two questions: first, how do Deleuze and Guattari's concepts relate to practice (i.e. architecture or art practice); second, how are

Foucault's concept of 'neo-liberal governmentality' and Deleuze and

Guattari's concept of 'smooth space' to be understood if that space, and with it all its subjects, is 'reduced to a mere "material organization"', (Spencer 2011, 19) in which any *critical* space is eliminated. The last

question is all the more poignant for architecture since the originally critical space of architecture, associated with Deleuze and Guattari's

'striated space', which was a space of physical enclosure with normative quality, seems to be entirely and uncritically given up in favour of the

'smooth space', which by itself seems incapable of producing architectural space at all.

A return to conservative or mystical conditions of architecture in a totally neo-liberal context would be unfeasible from the start. The research of the 'lost' space of architecture in the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari as representatives of post-structural philosophy and its current philosophical descendants in general promises to provide insights not only about how culture can critically relate to a neo-liberal environment, but also more importantly, how material culture relates to linguistic culture and how their entanglement or mutual dispersion is capable of (spatially) *voiding* the global machinations of capitalism.

À la recherche d'une Lingua Sapiens

For this purpose one might compare Spencer's text, the main part of which is an exploration of architectural Deleuzism through the example of Foreign Office Architecture's (FOA) design for the new campus of Ravensbourne College for digital media and design (2010) in London,

with Ursprung's analysis of Lacaton and Vassal's Nantes School of Architecture. (2009) Ursprung titles his essay 'Out of Bologna', suggesting that this building both has emerged from and is outside Europe's expansion and unification of higher education known as the Bologna Process. The building indeed becomes a placeholder for the machinations of the 'societies of control' as well as a suggestion of how to counter them.

The two texts employ formulations that are virtually identical to describe the respective buildings, suggesting a high degree of architectural similarity between the two examples. Spencer, however, uses such formulations and descriptions in order to denounce the architecture of neo-liberalism, the building as a spatial support of neo-liberalism, and the architects as neo-liberalism's conscious connivers; while Ursprung uses the same formulations and descriptions in order to praise the architect's conscious countering of neo-liberalism through an architectural space that opens possibilities of critical action and reflection. Both authors are obviously critical of neo-liberalism. By using almost identical descriptions for almost identical buildings, necessarily the question arises: What marks the difference? If one was to read only one text, one might risk, in both cases, to take the described forms as

formal prescriptions assuring the respective political position. There must be a difference that is either more subtle or located elsewhere.

The Ravensbourne College is located on the Greenwich Peninsula, a former industrial area (due to its water supply from the Thames on three sides) now being substantially redeveloped with new homes, offices, schools, and parks. 'The main entrance [of the building] opens out onto one of its large atria, [a] quasi public space [...] intended as a bridge between the urban environment [...] and the college itself [where] the visitor encounters an informal space which includes a "meet and greet" area, a delicatessen and an 'event' space hosting public displays and exhibitions'. (Spencer 2011, 16) This is 'a place, then, in which the activities of the market appear indissoluble from those of urban life, entertainment and education. Wire-mesh-sided stairways and passages are cantilevered into the atrium [...] form[ing] a complex series of crossings and intersections across mezzanine levels whose dynamics are further animated by the movements of the building's occupants'. (16) 'The building's circulation is designed not only to serve as an image of movement, but to organize that movement according to a principle of connective liquefaction. Ascent through the building's floors [...] is staggered across its two wings so as to accentuate the condition of movement over that of occupation'. (16)

Similarly, the Nantes School of Architecture ‘is located [in] the former harbour area [with a] neighbourhood [that] features the mixture of offices, housing, cultural venues, and vacant lots typical of gentrified waterfront areas, with their aura of both factory ruin and construction site’. (Ursprung 2015, 1) ‘The asphalt from the street seem[s] to continue seamlessly into the entry hall [...] a non-ceremonial transitional area between outside and inside, public and private, a common zone where students and teachers, administrators, and passersby meet’. (2)

‘Circulation literally seem[s] to be running through the various floors [intertwining] parking, teaching, learning, and administration’. (2) ‘Connections [are] simple, and some spaces, such as the main lecture hall, [can] be perceived from various parts of the building because their volumes [intersect] with the other spaces of the school’. (2)

This ‘liquefaction’ of circulation, characteristic of both buildings, is extended to ‘undivided floor spans [d]ifferentiated only by mobile partitions [suggesting] informal access and the integration of programmes within a continuously mobile and flexible whole’. (Spencer 2011, 16) ‘The overarching principle of organization’, (16) apparent in both buildings, ‘is designed to preclude the establishment of any fixed pattern of occupation or consistent identification of certain spaces with certain programmes’, (16) which according to Spencer is ‘a principle of

“deterritorialisation”’. (16) The architects Lacaton & Vassal of the school in Nantes designed ‘double-height unprogrammed volumes [providing] the school with adaptable and multifunctional spaces that will allow the building to be repurposed rather than destroyed and built anew’.

(Ursprung 2015, 3)⁽⁹⁾ They realized this structure ‘using a standard support system known, for instance, from IKEA storage buildings, which allow for important loads the structure is open to future rearrangements’. (3)

Managerial concepts like the ‘Univer-City’ and the ‘Learning Landscape’ by the architectural consultancy DEGW⁵⁰ provide a

⁽⁹⁾ Ursprung is quoting Nathalie Janson. (Janson 2011, 26)

⁵⁰ Spencer relates open and flexible organisational diagrams to the concepts of the ‘Univer-City’, according to which ‘traditional categories of space are becoming less meaningful as space becomes less specialized, [and] boundaries blur’. (Spencer 2011, 16) and to DEGW’s concept of the ‘Learning Landscape’, in which ‘future students are likely to rank educational institutions by their ability to deliver employment and to accommodate diverse approaches to learning’. (15) Spencer quotes from: John Worthington/DEGW, ‘Univer-Cities in their Cities: Conflict and Collaboration’, paper presented at OECD Education Management Infrastructure Division, Higher Education Spaces & Places for Learning, Education and Knowledge Exchange, University of Latvia, Riga, 6-8 December 2009, www.oecd.lu.lv/materials/johnworthington.pdf, pp. 30-1, accessed 21 August 2010. ‘[This] precisely reflects’, Spencer argues, ‘[the organizational diagram] of other spaces designed to accommodate the mechanism of managerialism, where, as Mark Fisher has argued, “Flexibility,”

universal managerial answer to Ursprung's question if there is 'a spatiality of the transformation of higher education', (Ursprung 2015, 5) or 'an architecture that depicts "Bologna"', (5) meaning the Bologna Process.

However, Ursprung detects urban qualities in the school in Nantes that exceed 'urban mimesis', (Spencer 2011, 16) as Spencer has called it. For instance, Ursprung describes how the exterior ramp, which continues the asphalt from the street, 'gently leads to the upper decks and [...] can be used by pedestrians and bicycles, but also', (2015, 1) as he underlines, 'by cars and trucks'. (1 2) Ursprung acknowledges that 'the constant and open-ended adaptability of the building is intrinsically linked to the Bologna Process'; (7) however, simultaneously, 'the presence of transport containers on various decks of the school, of caravans in the exhibition hall, and even of a boat and a truck in the workshop on the ground floor' Ursprung interprets as 'revealing for a situation that is far beyond the era of the ivory tower'. (7) For Ursprung 'the Nantes School of Architecture resonates with the spaces of

'nomadism' and 'spontaneity' are the very hallmarks of management". (16; Fisher 2009, 28) Spencer concludes that such space is, 'the idealized model of the urban, as the networked and extensive environment of the market form, rather than [...] a space, say, of social contestation'. (16)

European bureaucracy in "Brussels" and "Paris", as well as with the innumerable investments in roads, bridges, and other traffic infrastructure that go with the European Union'. (7) Ursprung's conclusion is compelling, pointing a vector towards a truly political potential of architecture, which goes beyond mere mimesis of managerialism: 'the building is about an interaction between architecture and infrastructure'. (7) Ursprung affirms that by means of its infrastructure

the Nantes School of Architecture demonstrates that architecture does not have to subscribe to the ideology of reduction, scarcity, and control, although it has to be conscious of it, letting us see more than what the political decision-makers say. (7)

In consequence, such a building 'is also a place where the autonomy of architecture is tested'. (7)

Towards an Architectural Language of *Trans-Neo-Liberalism*

What then are the architectural means that the architects use for 'letting us see more'? (7) More than by making visible, they do so by opening the

spaces to unintended uses. Ursprung repeatedly draws on a traditional formal repertoire of architectural design practice that the architects Lacaton and Vassal apply consciously and strategically – and which do not contradict flexibility – such as ‘[working] with contrasts of dark and light-filled zones, narrow and wide spaces, low and high ceilings, ramps, and stairs [or] spectacular views’. (2) The architects thus generate ‘a huge variety of spatial and chromatic experiences’. (3) ‘The opaque polycarbonate sheets, with their undulating surface’, for example, ‘frame, blur and distort the environment, allowing us to see it differently’. (3) From the outside, ‘for those approaching [the building], these membranes open different perspectives on the inside, such as the concrete structure supporting the auditorium seating, [or] material stacked in the workshops, as if one were passing a series of *nature morte* paintings’. (3)

Beyond ‘such formal associations’, (3) as Ursprung calls them, the architects’ strategies also permit a spatial stretching or distortion, and thus questioning, of the managerial imperatives given by the political framework of the Bologna Process. The ‘transitional area between outside and inside, public and private’, (2) that is so often the result of a deliberate blurring of public and private, generating an often deplored apparatus of control for the sake of supposedly heightened need of

security, in the case of the Nantes school turns the logic upside down. Rather than pretending an institutional, rather collective space to be public, the architecture of the entrance suggests a seemingly private intimacy within the public realm, so that Ursprung ‘had the impression of entering the school through the back door’. (2) Ursprung writes that, as a result of this architectural quality, he ‘immediately became sympathetic to the building.’ (2)

Instead of being dwarfed and intimidated by a monumental entrance structure, as with many institutions of higher education, I felt like an insider, like someone who knew the shortcuts, who was familiar with the place and was free to approach its entrance via the garage. (2)

What struck me when I visited the Nantes School of Architecture myself in autumn 2016, with regard to the intimate entrance situation, was how it has been contrasted architecturally by placing monumental spaces on the upper floors, hidden, though close, making public access to them a question of deliberate choice. Placed along the slidable façade these spaces provide for the students the opportunity of testing the criticality of their practical education in a public, yet protected intimacy. As if the model was reversed, here the entrance area is dimensioned with regard to convenient access to generously designed spaces of work.

The examples show how in one case a large architectural space, as a representational entry hall, exposes every activity in it to public control, while in the other it provides an infrastructural generosity and support of critical study. The same architectural language can be spoken to allow for opposed possibilities of use. It is thus not a question of this or that formal element employed, which provide the weapons, but a question of its critical architectural use, that is, of the cause for which the architecture fights. This is also to say, that the transgressive force of architectural language depends on who is being addressed.⁵¹

⁵¹ It may be Deleuzian to forget Deleuze at times and instead to count, as Deleuze suggests, on the contingency of an encounter: 'it can only be sensed [and it] forces us to think'. (Deleuze 2012b, 176) Contingency, by definition, cannot be Deleuzian, nor pertaining to any ideology. Ideology and 'theory's current status', as Spencer remarks, 'ought to be contested through the exercise of its critical capacities *against* an architecture itself now instrumentalised for and within neoliberalism'. Spencer's blog *The Spatial Register*: <https://spatialregister.wordpress.com/2015/08/26/preface-to-architectural-deleuzism/> (accessed August 16 2016).

Infrastructure

The Scenes behind the Scenes of Architecture

The registers of architectural language which is a language of affect cannot be mastered by conceptual language alone. In the publication *Les coulisses d'une architecture* (Paul *et al.* 2013) the architects, with other professionals involved in the design and building process, give account on the contingencies of practical decision-making. The criticality present in and made possible by the spaces of the resulting building necessarily had to be present in its design and building process in the first place. Processes of architecture and art practice are never as smooth as the results might suggest. Rather, the way in which the architects address those involved in the project is congruent with what the building addresses. Clearly, there is never a question of who could be addressed by what the building represents. On the contrary, the building represents itself and its possible uses and thus addresses anyone approaching the building as a potential user.

The Face of Infrastructure

According to Ursprung, 'by declining to build a cellar, an attic, and a subterranean parking lot, the architects put all the features of a school's life on the table'. (2015, 2) As a result of these clearly conscious decisions, 'the way of working is part of the work'. (2) The 'table' to which Ursprung refers is the building itself including the school's life, the work, which takes place in and around the building. The apparent refusal to hide should not be misunderstood as non-criticality. Rather than exhibiting the users in circulation, forcing upon them the image of neo-liberal motivation, the building totally subsumes circulation leaving no space where it and its users may be exhibited.

In terms of art, where there is no place of exhibition, there is no final piece of art to be exhibited: there is only art practice. And where there are no artworks, there only art works. When Ursprung writes, that the architects put everything on the table, they eliminate the separation between what is being exhibited and what is not, in formal and functional architectural terms (i.e. not hiding the parking lot, or the storage spaces). That everything is somehow exhibited in terms of putting everything on the table amounts to an indiscernibility of

exhibition. This is how, critically, practice becomes part of a final, yet never finalised work.

In the Nantes School of Architecture, as in the Ravensborough building, emphasis is put on the way of work, the endlessly postponed project, the provisional trafficking and managing rather than on final monumental stability and imagery. The concept of management in the form of traffic and infrastructure, however, is in Nantes given as graspable material with which to work critically. It is not there merely as an image of something, but as the full but divertible reality of neo-liberalism. The refusal to hide the parking under the ground symbolises and spatially fixes the refusal to hide the global machinations of capital. They are made available as working material to be used and deferred. The building could be seen as an example of a dignifying infrastructure, actively providing the means to produce new values. It is so because it actually ceases to be infrastructural in architectural terms: the Nantes School of Architecture pushes its infrastructure to the point at which it becomes architecture. This is a critical redefinition, not an expansion, of architecture. It is not about architecture being captured by infrastructure, but *vice versa*: architecture captures the characteristics of infrastructure as dignifying characteristics and transmits their potential for the work, or the ways of working, related to it.

Lacaton & Vassal by proposing ‘almost double the space’

(Ursprung 2015, 8) than required by the competition brief ‘for the same price’ (8) open up a space in which the issue is not how the building looks, in the first place, but rather how the building works. ‘By fixing the exchange rate’, as Deleuze put it, ‘much more than by lowering the cost’, (1992, 6) the architects manage to ‘conquer[r] the market [...] by grabbing control and by transformation of the product much more than [...] by disciplinary training [or] by specialisation of production’. (6) They do so in order to redirect the means of the society of control onto a space and a way of working in which architecture can again be ‘designed at the architect’s discretion’. (Ursprung 2015, 8)⁵²

As Deleuze notes, redirection of forces is a form of ‘corruption’, though with a ‘new power’. (Deleuze 1992, 6) The new power of corruption lies at the heart of the discipline. Rather than corrupting the discipline, the new power of corruption is the ‘new form of resistance against the societies of control’. (7) It replaces the by now ‘inept’ ‘unions’, or rather, ‘adapts’ them in the name of the discipline as a kind of *disciplinary control from within*.

⁵² Ursprung is quoting from Janson. (Janson 2011, 26)

The Absolute Architecture Meets the Absolute Infrastructure

Keller Easterling recognises that ‘buildings are no longer singularly crafted enclosures, uniquely imagined by an architect, but reproducible products set within similar urban arrangements. As repeatable phenomena engineered around logistics and the bottom line, they constitute an infrastructural technology with elaborate routines and schedules for organizing consumption’. (Easterling 2014, II 2)⁵³ Easterling therefore argues that, ‘infrastructure is then not the urban substructure, but the urban structure itself’. (12) Despite this recognition, despite Easterling’s hope for a ‘reincarnation’ of architecture ‘as something more powerful as [infrastructural] information’, and despite her claim that ‘static objects and volumes in urban space [have] agency [and] infrastructure space is *doing something*’,

⁵³ This claim is also valid for signature buildings, which reproduce the products that meet expectations within marketable settings of corporate identity (whether for private firms or ‘public’ cities). This is why it is tempting but mistaken to oppose ‘the design of individual signature buildings’ to ‘the organization of complex, overlapping and often transnational systems of energy, transportation and natural ecology’ as the evidence on which to base ‘infrastructural concerns within the theory and practice of the discipline [of architecture]’, as has been claimed by Joel McKim in an article entitled ‘Radical Infrastructure? A New Realism and Materialism in Philosophy and Architecture’. (2015, 133)

(13 4) she falls back onto the old opposition of building against infrastructure she appeared to have abandoned. When she says that ‘infrastructure space is a form, but not like a building is a form’, ‘there are object forms like buildings and active forms like bits of code in the software that organizes building’, (14) then she argues as if buildings could not be infrastructural.

Easterling seems trapped by the omnipotence of infrastructure that, if truly omnipotent, has nothing left by which it could be subsumed as substructure. Infrastructure when directed against architecture, from an architectural standpoint, risks corrupting architecture into an instrument of dominating ideology reproducing nothing but market forces. Instead, infrastructure, in order for it to corrupt the market from an architectural standpoint, would have to be subsumed by architecture by means of a critical acclaim.

If architecture does not manage to dignify infrastructure by integrating it in its experience as an indispensable base (i.e. the table), then the predominance of infrastructure risks ending up in the same absolutist camp with the ‘absolute architecture’ of Pier Vittorio Aureli. (Aureli 2011) Aureli’s argument, drawing on Oswald Mathias Ungers and OMA’s ‘Project of the City as Archipelago’, seems directly opposed to

Easterling’s. ‘In an argument critical of the logic of urbanization (and its instigator, capitalism)’, (2) Aureli attempts to ‘redefine *political* and *formal* as concepts that can define architecture’s essence as form’. (2) Aureli wants to ‘illustrate a counterproject for the city the archipelago by referring to a specific architectural form that is a counterform within and against the totality of urbanization’. (2) For Aureli such specificity of architectural form is certainly not ‘information’, as in Easterling’s proposal, but a form based on the distinction between a concept of the *city* and a concept of *urbanization*.

Aureli addresses ‘the unequivocal social and cultural power architecture possesses to produce representations of the world through exemplary forms of built reality’. (1) Consequently, for Aureli ‘the problem of *form* that is, the strategizing of architecture’s being becomes crucial’. It is hard not to agree with Aureli that ‘the making of form is thus the real and effective necessary program of architecture’. (1)

Rejecting ‘iconic buildings, parametric design, or redundant mappings of every possible complexity and contradiction of the urban world’, (1 2) Aureli is analytically aligned with Easterling. If a strategic architectural form aspires to a ‘significant and critical relationship’ (2) with the world, which ‘is no longer constituted by the idea and the

motivations of the city, but is instead dominated by urbanization', (2) then it must understand, according to Aureli, 'how urbanization has historically come to prevail over the city'. (2) Instead of developing an urban concept of architecture, which would necessarily incorporate its complexities and contradictions and would therefore have to address its inheritances from post-modernism, Aureli suggests 'a counterproject for the city'. (2) By this he means a redefinition of the concept of the city capable of opposing urbanisation. Under the pretence of protecting architecture from a confrontation with urbanisation, Aureli stages a supplementary conflict: one between the city and urbanisation. By taking architecture out of the crossfire, however, it becomes redundant to investigate the alluded specificities of architecture that supposedly would be capable of dealing with the 'totality of urbanization'. (2) Aureli's move is a mock battle that, rather than saving, leaves architecture abandoned in the midst of urbanisation.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Compare Pier Vittorio Aureli's conservative thinking of separation to David Harvey, who in *Rebel Cities*, referring to Lefebvre, productively and progressively confirms that 'under [global] conditions the question of the right to the city [...] had to give way to some vaguer question of the right to urban life, which later morphed in [Lefebvre's] thinking into the more general question of the right to *The Production of Space*. Harvey and Lefebvre are not referred to in Aureli's text. See: Harvey 2013; Lefebvre 1991, 2003.

Taking the concept of the city – the *polis* – as the base of society and politics to found his argument, Aureli argues that 'if politics is agonism through separation and confrontation, it is precisely in the process of separation inherent in the making of architectural form that the political in architecture lies'. (ix) For Aureli conflictual separation is the essence of architecture and the city as political form:

The very condition of architectural form is to separate and to be separated. (ix)⁵⁵

Aureli recognises that 'the rise of urbanization as an apparatus of governance is marked precisely by the constant dialectic of integration and closure', (xi) in which the proliferation of enclaves, walls, and apparatuses of control and closure are established in order to maintain the "smoothness" of global economic trade'. (xi) Aureli sees 'the possibility of an absolute architecture [...] in the alteration of this dialectic by reclaiming separation, not only as part of the principle of urban management but as a form that exceeds it'. (xi) He draws on

⁵⁵ Compare how Aureli's position is diametrically opposed to philosophers of 'agonism' such as Mouffe, in particular, who clarifies that with 'agonism [...] we are faced not with a friend-enemy relation, but with a relation of what I call "adversaries" [who are] "friendly enemies", in the sense that they have something in common: they share a symbolic space'. (Miessen 2012, 10)

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's late projects, which according to Aureli 'absorbed the reifying forces of urbanization, but presented them not as ubiquitous but as finite, clearly separated parts'. (xi)

Aureli suggests good architectural governance capable of opposing bad urban governance. In 'the idea of the archipelago as a form of a city' (xi) he sees exemplified the reestablishment of the city as a site of political confrontation and 'recomposition of parts'. (xi) What Aureli is not capable to capture is that separation only maintains a relation to life when it keeps in touch.

Friendship is not French

While clearly drawing on Guattari and Deleuze's chapter '440: The Smooth and The Striated' in *A Thousand Plateaus*, kidnapping their terms in inverted commas, such as *smoothness* or the *sea* – a chapter in which, after all, 'the nomads of the archipelagoes' make their appearance – Aureli never acknowledges the reference. Although he might be subversively hinting at the excessive use and abuse of Deleuze

and Guattari's chapter in architectural discourse – to which he now presumably adds a critical layer – Aureli's account of the 'dialectic of integration and closure' (xi) at play in urban governance is nevertheless confusing.

First Aureli states that 'within urbanization, *integration* and *closure* are [...] two simultaneous phenomena', (xi, my emphasis) while later, 'in contrast to the *integrative* apparatus of urbanization, the archipelago envisions the city as the agonistic struggle of parts whose forms are finite', (xi, my emphasis) that is to say, *closed*. Such confusions can be traced back to Deleuze himself. While in his collaboration with Guattari smooth and striated spaces are treated as analytical tools to critically examine capitalism, in which the mutual 'passages and combinations' (2013, 581) are of philosophical interest rather than a political program, in the *Postscript on the Societies of Control* Deleuze explicitly develops such a *program*. Here the distinctions between 'moulds' and 'modulations', between 'distinct castings' and 'self-deforming casts', between 'spaces of enclosure' and 'spaces of control' (Deleuze 1992, 4) are put in a historical genealogy – based on Foucault's analysis – from the '*societies of sovereignty*' to '*disciplinary societies*' and to the '*societies of control*'. (3) Deleuze renders the *logic* of the passage from 'mould' to 'modulation', from 'mole' to 'serpent', etc. and sketches the

contours of a ‘beginning [...] crisis of the institutions, which is to say, the progressive and dispersed installation of a new system of domination’. (7) The program for Deleuze consists in finding ‘new forms of resistance’, (7) which for the disciplines were represented by the ‘unions’, (7) or in more direct words: ‘There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons’. (4)

However, the weapons Deleuze is looking for are clearly new because they have to relate to and exist within the new order. Aureli’s concept of separation and enclosure, in contrast, refer to a conception of the Greek city functioning (ideally) only with a clear separation of economy and politics: the house of the master, *oikos*, and the space of discourse between the masters, *polis*. Instead of looking for a critical smoothness within a smooth paradigm, Aureli confuses agonism with antagonism and proposes architecture as antagonism’s natural protagonist.

With regard to Lacaton & Vassas integratively agonistic practice of addressing and to the above revealed omission of the reference to Deleuze and Guattari, and with the aim of approaching the point of *friendship* and a concept of architecture as touching encounter, a closer look at how Aureli treats friendship in his text is illuminating. As in the

detection of forgery, the authenticity of a work is best examined where the author put least importance in its making.

Antiformalist Form

Aureli draws on Mies’s architecture as exemplary for his concept of an *archipelago* of architecture. Mies ‘rarely expressed positions, or even opinions, on politics, and he always showed a caustic attitude towards theoretical discourses on form in architecture,’ as Aureli acknowledges, ‘to the point that historian Werner Oechslin defined Mies as the greatest antiformalist architect of the twentieth century’. (2011, 34) Despite his recognition of Mies’s distance to form, Aureli defines this ‘distance’ as ‘the framing of space,’ understood as formal and not social framing. Aureli also draws on Manfredo Tafuri’s point that ‘the silent forms through which Mies pursued this goal are far from idealistic’. (34) Nevertheless, Aureli argues that:

Mies allowed the attributes of industrial technology – the famous I-beams used in the Seagram Building façade, for example – to enter and envelope his architecture [so that] the forces of urbanization in the form

of the mass production of building technology became the very *appearance* of his architecture (34, my emphasis).

Aureli suggests that Mies' architecture was not a critical embodiment of urbanization which would be the meaning of the non-idealistic use of urbanization Tafuri has suggested but, instead, the substructure of an 'envelope' and 'appearance'. Whether Aureli's interpretation is correct or not, he inverts both Oechslin's and Tafuri's position without averting the reader that he is doing so.

Moreover, Aureli puts at stake what he calls the disciplinary 'lifetime friendship and collaboration' (35) between Mies and the urban planner and architect Ludwig Hilberseimer. Aureli displays 'Hilberseimer's idea of the city' that 'consisted of the most extreme reduction of city form to the logic of urban management [...] to the point that,' referring to Albert Pope, 'his urban plans were made not for "form" but of "space"'. (35) Having set the discursive anti-form-analogy between the two architect friends, Aureli takes the double meaning of the word 'plan' in order to make the discourse formal again. Aureli states that the spatial quality of Hilberseimer's plans 'is evident in the way Hilberseimer *drew* his urban plans'. (35, my emphasis) 'Only the system of circulation and the natural features of the territory are figured in these plans [and] the diagrammatic minimalism through which

Hilberseimer represented his plans is much more than a simple technique of drawing'. (35) For Aureli, 'such graphic minimalism amounts to a highly evocative rendering of the very ethos of urbanization', that is, the managerial paradigm of capitalism. 'Hilberseimer's drawings suggest a complete acceptance of the main value of urbanization that of management', Aureli claims, 'yet they express this without any formal commentary'. (35) Aureli thus suggests a lack of criticality on the side of Hilberseimer. Aureli still positions Mies in analogy to Hilberseimer, reduced to the 'technique of drawing, [the] graphic minimalism, [which is] the same'. (35) However, with the 'backdrop [of the] grey *unaesthetic* logic [of the] urban plan', (35, my emphasis) Aureli makes an abrupt turn and suddenly claims that 'the "silence" of Mies's architecture seems to [fill the] completely dissolved' (35) architectural *forms* in Hilberseimer's urban plans. 'Hilberseimer's "generic city" can be seen as the backdrop to Mies's projects', Aureli argues, 'which seem to be the most appropriate *form* within Hilberseimer's *ruthless* reduction of the city to the logic of urbanization'. (35, my emphasis)

By opposing 'form' to 'ruthlessness', Aureli renders 'form' respectful, and consequently, but almost unrecognizably, opposes respectful architecture to ruthless urbanism, respectful Mies to ruthless

Hilberseimer. Aureli does not address the problematic light such a reading casts onto the ‘lifetime friendship and collaboration’ (35) between Mies and Hilberseimer.

This exhibition of Aureli’s construction of a precarity in the friendship between Mies and Hilberseimer does not question Aureli’s credentials in vindicating, in his own words, ‘Hilberseimer’s [overlooked] radicality [which] consists in his lucid and realist analysis of the capitalist city’. (Hilberseimer 2016, 335) We might use a formulation Aureli uses to describe Hilberseimer’s method in order to formulate a critique of his construction:

He put the problems on the table and identified existing architectural examples that might provide a basis for further research. (362)

Unlike Hilberseimer, Aureli does not use his examples (i.e. Hilberseimer) as witnesses that contemplate his argumentation; rather, he constructs them in such a way they perform what he wants to say, thus destroying them.

This corruption of the friendships between Mies and Hilberseimer is even more unfortunate considering Aureli’s following argument, according to which the ‘element that defined all of Mies’s projects [was] the careful placement of buildings through the use of the

plinth’. (2011, 36) What else if not the plinth is, in architectural terms, the exact point to discuss the relationship between infrastructure and architecture, or architecture and the metropolis? The plinth makes Mies’ architecture not only thoroughly urban-conscious but, indeed and against Aureli’s argument metropolitan.

The Tectonic of Theatricality

Gevork Hartoonian notes that ‘tectonics attains *visibility* through anonymity’: (Hartoonian 2014, 81)

internalizing the nihilism of technology, the tectonics suspends this process of internalization by the very fact that it cannot disguise the fact that it is a *fabrication* in the first place. (81)

In such a definition the reduction of current art to discursive practice comes closer than ever to the ‘tectonic’ as ‘that which is particular to architecture’. (81) Hartoonian posits ‘this is anathema to the spectacle and it is the nucleus of the political in the theory of tectonics’ because ‘the “modesty” informing the tectonics lies in the singularity of its

objectivity’. (81) For Hartoonian ‘the tectonic of theatricality’ (81) which he associates with Gouffried Semper’s open theory of tectonics and with Benjamin’s ‘exhibition value of the work’, (81) ‘facilitate[s] a dialectical play between the technical and the mental’, (81) the questions of how it is made and how it shows, in which ‘the technical means becomes cognitive, and’, referring to Antonio Negri, ‘intelligence becomes technique and labour’. (81)

This is of interest because unlike the times in which Semper or Benjamin were writing, today we perceive the world as *totally* urbanised. David Cunningham, also referring to Negri, explains that ‘the “internally antagonistic” spatial configuration of the advanced metropolis’ which reveals the wrong antagonism between political architecture and apolitical urbanisation at the base of Aureli’s argument ‘is that which might extend and replace the privileged place previously accorded to the industrial factory as the crucial site of contemporary social production, cooperation, and conflict’. (Cunningham 2014, 11) Whereas the visibility of what is being fabricated in Marx’s times was linked to the industrial factory, defining it as the site of political antagonism, today the factory is anywhere, and the site of political antagonism consequently is the metropolis in its global potential.

Hartoonian observes that ‘a critical discussion concerning the position of any cultural product in capitalism today runs through a network of interrelationships where a clear demarcation between the old notions such as “base” and “superstructure” is almost impossible’. (69) This impossibility is the main characteristic of ‘the progressive and dispersed installation of a new system of domination’, (Deleuze 1992, 7) to which both art and architecture must confront with the question how to ‘appear’ in such apparent lack of separation.

Politics

Discursive Spaces of (Non-Constructed) Encounters

Lahijj has edited a number of books collecting essays on reclaiming or discussing political criticality in architecture. He has also published a

book that is an *essay* in itself, in as much as it practically probes a discursive alternative, entitled *Can Architecture be an Emancipatory Project?* (Lahiji 2016)

Lahiji asks if architectural discourse can rethink itself in terms of a radical emancipatory project, and if so, what the contours of such a project would be. Referring to Maurizio Lazzarato, he argues that ‘a philosophy of the “virtual” has been corrupted into the “virtuality” of finance capitalism and credit’ (x) and today ‘the cultural discourse of contemporary architecture happily abets the grand “utopian” project of neoliberalism’s subjection of all social forms to the logics of “the market”’. (xi) Such abetment, for Lahiji, consequently leads to ‘a counter-Enlightenment turn towards new forms of idolatry’, to a contemporary architecture ‘all about the surface of culture and its re-enchantment as commodity form’. (xii) Drawing on Alain Badiou’s registration of a ‘deeper betrayal [of] May ’68’, (xi) the betrayal of radical left, communist ideas by libertarian ideas, which lead to the victory of ‘unfettered neoliberal capitalism’, (xi) Lahiji asks ‘what historical agent offers a possibility of emancipation, and where [it is] located in the urban, social, and architectural reality of today’. (xi)

Lahiji assembles a presumed ‘alliance’ to an emancipatory politics against the endgame of capitalist ‘deterritorialization’ and ‘fluidification’, and the superficial ‘re-enchantment of culture’ and architecture. Rather than forging that alliance into a manifesto-like pronunciamiento, Lahiji vigilantly and surprisingly with regard to his supposedly radical assumptions constructs an academic dialogue offering unequalled opportunities. Moreover, while decrying the Deleuzian notion of ‘deterritorialization’ by lending himself to the corruption of the term by neo-liberal capitalism, Lahiji invents an ‘architectural *dispositif*’ (xi) with the capacity of producing a ‘deterritorializing’ scientific method for both the contributors and the readers.

What is described here is more than a discussion of the content of the book. It critically discusses the book’s strategic composition with regard to what it has to say. Lahiji’s ‘architectural *dispositif*’ has the capacity of generating ‘dialogues on architecture and the left’, giving the book its subtitle. It asks a number of interlocutors with different positions – Libero Andreotti, David Cunningham, Peggy Deamer, Erik Swynedouw – to pose questions to which the other interlocutors respond in the form of academic essays. These essays are circulated and each interlocutor considers the others’ responses in a second essay.

Lahiji, having the overview, plays moderator honing the edges of the arguments. The initial questions and essays are collected, complemented by an essay of Lahiji declaring his own position and, finally, completed by Joan Ockman's concluding afterword as a previously uninvolved expert voice.

This 'system' results in a mode of writing in which each interlocutor feels compelled to acknowledge the others' positions, to interact with them and to discuss them in their own discursive contribution on the basis of a friendship, while profoundly aware of the academic credentials at stake. It is a dialogue understood in an agonistic sense. As opposed to the convention of naming other voices by the surname of the author the interlocutors are called by their first name as the sign of an informal conversation. The responses are sharp and, it seems, more precise than in conventional essays. Although at times the intertwining of all the positions may seem viscous there is an overall impression of the accomplishment of actual hard academic labour. Each essay integrates and reflects all present positions, giving an extraordinarily transparent opportunity to x-ray the problematic.

Struggling with Struggling Theory

Lahiji aligns his system with 'what Slavoj Žižek has called "struggling theory"'. (2016, xiii) All 'the contributors to [the] book', as Lahiji claims, certainly 'profess an alliance to an emancipatory politics against', in Žižek's words, "the gnostic-digital dream of transforming humans themselves into virtual software that can reload itself from one hardware to another". (xiii) It is not clear, however, if they all would agree to call this 'the endgame of capitalist "deterritorialization" and "fluidification"', which Lahiji also claims.⁵⁶ Still it opens the question, whether 'deterritorialization' is being not only abused by capitalist managerialism but also falsely abused and decried as 'capitalist' by the 'radical Left', or if, indeed, 'deterritorialization' is inherently managerial and capitalist.

Turning to Žižek, for him there are two such struggling theories, Marxism and psychoanalysis, 'not only [because t]hey are both [...]

theories about struggle, but theories which are themselves engaged in a

⁵⁶ Note that Nadir Lahiji kidnaps these denunciations of Deleuze's notions also from Slavoj Žižek: '[...] in radical capitalist "deterritorialization" and "fluidification" (the trend which reaches its apotheosis in the gnostic-digital [...])' (Žižek 2008, 5).

Metropolitics: Sociality of Abstracted Equivalence

Despite their agreement on ‘emancipatory political sequences’ for architectural discursive practice the differences between the interlocutors concern the way in which ‘the political’, and particularly the political of architecture, relates to the socio-economic reality of urbanisation or the metropolis. Cunningham, in opposition to Andreotti’s and Swyngedouw’s distinctive positions, argues that ‘politics’ and ‘political economy’ cannot be separated in a capitalist society. He sees a need for ‘coming to terms with the ineliminability of abstraction itself as a central dimension of all modern societies’. (105) Cunningham calls such a ‘contemporary *metropolitan* politics of emancipation and transformation’ (105) ‘metropolitics’. (Lahiji, 2014, 11) Referring to Massimo Cacciari, Cunningham draws ‘on the historical breach constituted, politically as well as socially, by the form of the *metropolis* itself [...] in which each particular “place” is rendered *equivalent* in a universal circulation and exchange. This [equivalence] is

struggle’. (2008, 3) They are ‘struggling theories’ because they ‘imply and practice [...] an engaged notion of truth’. (3) Žižek calls this ‘the wager of Truth [...] not by running after “objective” truth, but by holding onto the truth about the position from which one speaks’. (3)

According to Žižek, Truth ‘emerges and is constituted through the very political struggle of/for naming and, as such, cannot be grounded in any particular determinate content’. (5) What seems key, is the insistence on rejecting a *final* truth. What counts is the struggle that emerges from the statement spoken from a position of truth. Žižek’s point is that in each struggle of ‘historical failure and monstrosity [personified by Martin Heidegger, Maximilien Robespierre, Mao Zedong, Joseph Stalin, etc.] there was in each of them a redemptive moment which gets lost in the liberal-democratic rejection and it is crucial to isolate this moment’. (7)

The point is to enter Lahiji’s dialogical approach to an emancipatory project of architecture with the sense of struggle he claims; to gather insights about how contemporary urbanisation relates to or redefines architecture and how this might be related to an emancipatory project of art through architecture.

certainly “economic” in form, but it is also profoundly *social* in the very fullest sense’. (Lahijj, 2016, 103)³⁷

This historic transformation of the social relates to the shift from the ‘disciplinary societies’ to the ‘societies of control’. The historical breach constituted by the metropolis is a transformation of the social as a set of rules pre-establishing hierarchical relations to the social as a fundamental *abstraction* of values, rendering them equivalent. With regard to the urban, the breach that renders all places equivalent may be seen as a shift from the disciplinary city as a set of rules pre-establishing hierarchical relations between places, to the metropolis of control as a fundamental abstraction of values and places.

When Cunningham at the end of his essay asks if it is ‘possible to imagine some form of urban connectivity or “commons” that would *not* involve fundamental forms of abstraction and mediation’, this question suggests that a *polis* without *metro* added to it has always been fundamentally unthinkable.

This induces us to think the concept of the *polis* in ‘metropolitical’ terms, as if the *polis* had always already been a

metropolis – a thought that is never explicitly expressed by Cunningham. On the contrary, by focussing on rendering the concept of the *polis* and the *agora* as a space of encounter as old-fashioned and obsolete, Cunningham seems not only ‘to forestall naïveté about what politics “alone” could really be’, (105) but also forestalls his own conception of architecture in ‘metropolitical’ terms.

If discourse wants to connect with practice and play an emancipatory political *qua* politico-economical role for architecture as such, it must ask what a space of *discursive* encounter could be today. This is the merit of Lahijj’s practical discursive approach, independent of the critique it deserves. As researchers we must ask in what spaces we (want to) encounter, how (we want) these spaces to work in order to turn managerial indifference into a sociality of abstracted equivalence.

In terms of Cunningham’s suggested question of how a commons can involve abstraction, we may project such abstraction into both the dialogue and the positions it contains. An encounter is missed when theory does not claim being occupied with the political act of staging the indifference between the *polis* and the *metropolis* and thus revaluating indifference into equivalence. By staging a *metropolitical encounter* it

³⁷ See Cacciari ‘Epilogue: On the Architecture of Nihilism’. (In Cacciari 1993, 199-211).

becomes an enactment of a society of abstracted equivalence actually engaging in working in groups.

Touching and Encounter

The Haptic and the Erotic

Staging the working in groups is not the same as group building. From this point of view, Lahiji's sophisticated system of dialogues remains a construing system. Rather than generating equal value between autonomous entities any system risks generating indifference towards values by the supremacy of the system itself. By staging, however, the system necessarily maintains its function as an infrastructure that allows for dignified work. Such an infrastructural system can never be stable, but rather must allow for a certain abstraction, remaining adaptable in

order to fulfil its task. In times in which the systematics of management threatens doing away with humanity at large, the question how infrastructures can be infused with dignity, so that they, in turn, can provide a dignifying base for work, is crucial for the survival of humanity. A stage, if taken as a place where a certain abstraction can be tested, provides such a dignifying base. Architecture taken as a subliminal stage of life corresponds with Benjamin's conception of the haptic appropriation of architecture and with Bataille's negative conception of architecture in the corporeal spaces of the anus, the mouth, or the eye. Such a conception of architecture can be one of architects planning and building, but more importantly any architecture can be conceived of as a stage. Thomas Demand's photographs of the models he builds show how architecture (or, indeed, any environment) when disposed of its ideological components becomes insignificant form.⁵⁸ The significance of the form is its potential. The example of the

⁵⁸ A particularly striking example, as Ben Lerner points to in a conversation with Alexander Kluge, is Thomas Demand's work *Folders* (2017), in which he rebuilt with blank cardboard and blank paper the folders that President-elect Donald Trump in a press conference claimed to be the documents, placed next to him as he spoke, which were evidence of the preparations he had made to give over control of his businesses to his sons. These papers appeared to actually have been blank. Demand thus builds a model of a reality that is itself a

Nantes School of Architecture shows how such a process of determination from a form derived of neo-liberal managerialism can be voided and left to potential uses. When looking at how the architects work and collaborate, the example also shows that the process of voiding of ideology starts in the process itself, that any place in which a stage is negotiated is already a stage. Here a critical reading of Easterling and Aureli give insight in how infrastructure can in fact be valued when it is given its infrastructural dignity, which does not have to be conservative in any way. Moreover, the analysis of the stage that Aureli erects around his writing demonstrates to what extent his project is a project of separation, and that the contrary – a project of abstracted equivalence – would provide the base for dignified metropolitan encounters. Lahijj's project proposes an attempt of such a project, but it also reveals some of its limits.

At this point, it is of interest to return to Benjamin and Bataille and test their conception of architecture not on the premises of what we assume to be architecture as a built form, but rather on the premise of

model already. It may seem that Demand has been redundandized by Trump, but we could say that the artist refuses to stop working. (Demand *et al.* 2017)

architecture as the space in which architecture is being negotiated. If there is a conceptual congruence of architecture between Bataille and Benjamin, how does it play out on the social level of encounter?

Bataille Politique: An Epoch-Making Encounter

During his refuge in Paris Benjamin was familiar with the Collège de Sociologie of which Bataille was one of the founders and most involved members. Moreover it is known that ‘nothing in the world, for me [Benjamin], could replace the Bibliothèque Nationale’ (1991, 1180; own translation from French original) and that Bataille worked there at this time as a librarian. Their contact was more than casual and pragmatic: Benjamin, when leaving Paris to escape the Nazis with the prospect of travelling to the United States from Lisbon to rejoin Adorno, entrusted Bataille with his *Arcades Project* manuscript and other texts. Bataille hid everything in the Bibliothèque Nationale and thus saved it from the Nazis, who entered Paris just the day after Benjamin left.

In different circumstances, there might have been a deeper theoretical exchange between Benjamin and Bataille. According to Gerhard Rupp, in the period before his escape Benjamin ‘prepares a philosophical congress within the framework of the Collège’. (Rupp 2007, 302; own translation) Rupp compares Benjamin and Bataille from the point of view of their alternative discursive practices. Whether Bataille inspired Benjamin with an allegorical, fragmentary style of writing remains unclear. Nevertheless, the ‘epistemological change’ from the ‘historiography of his own childhood in Berlin’ to ‘the historiography of modernity, the *Arcades Project*’ in Paris, from the ‘auto-biographical miniature’ to ‘the dialectical image’ (302) coincides with his encounter with Bataille at the Bibliothèque Nationale, writes Rupp. Perhaps more than their actual encounter, it is their missed intellectual encounter that unites them, possibly an impossible encounter due to their respective subjectivities of language.

Benjamin’s essay on Eduard Fuchs, written in the Bibliothèque Nationale, may witness such a missed encounter. He writes: ‘As a collector Fuchs is primarily a pioneer [...] He founded the only existing archive for the history of caricature, of erotic art and of the genre picture (*Sittenbild*)’. (1975, 27) Benjamin’s praise of Fuchs’ ‘brilliant defence of orgies’, (51) its infinite creativity and excess plays a central

role in Bataille’s theory of expenditure (the potlatch) and Benjamin’s allegorical use of objects, although Benjamin does not celebrate destruction in a same emphatic way as Bataille. Thus ‘the accentuation of the power of consumption, instead of the one of production’, (Rupp 2007, 307) leads Rupp to assume that the ‘*Fuchs* essay is essentially based on an indirect inspiration through Bataille’. (306) According to Rupp their ‘search for traditional orientations’ and ‘prospective cultural practices’ (308) connects Bataille and Benjamin. However, while Bataille tends towards ‘an abstract-negative critique of contemporaneity,’ a ‘fundamental opposition’, ‘literarily a difference “to do or die” is given in [Benjamin’s] practice of writing’. (308) The root of Benjamin’s practice of writing can be detected in the *Fuchs* essay itself, when he introduces Fuchs’ practice of collecting: ‘Because he was a pioneer, Fuchs became a collector’, writes Benjamin, continuing: ‘Fuchs is the pioneer of a materialist consideration of art. What made this materialist a collector, however, was the more or less clear feeling for the historical situation in which he saw himself. This was the situation of historical materialism itself’. (1975, 27) This analysis corresponds to his own practice of writing, which as the ‘concrete dialectic analysis of the particular subject being studied [...] includes a critique of the categories in which it was apprehended at an earlier level of reality and thought,’

as he writes in a letter to Horkheimer with explicit regard to the essay on Fuchs. (1994, 537) In style, Benjamin's criticality does not correspond with Bataille's opposition. The proximity between Bataille and Benjamin, or the difference with regard to common intuitions, is not that one opposes architecture and the other embraces it. Rather, the proximity between the two thinkers is contained in the very specific abstraction of the equivalence of their conceptions, the *tour de force* it would have demanded in making a conceptual encounter actually happen, of which both were certainly well aware. No other encounter is imaginable than one of deepest respect and trust. As if staging the most peaceful conception of metropolitical architecture, an architecture that politicises its measurability by providing a stage for the immeasurable

wealth of autonomous use, they perform the most profound encounter of friendship: nothing must happen.

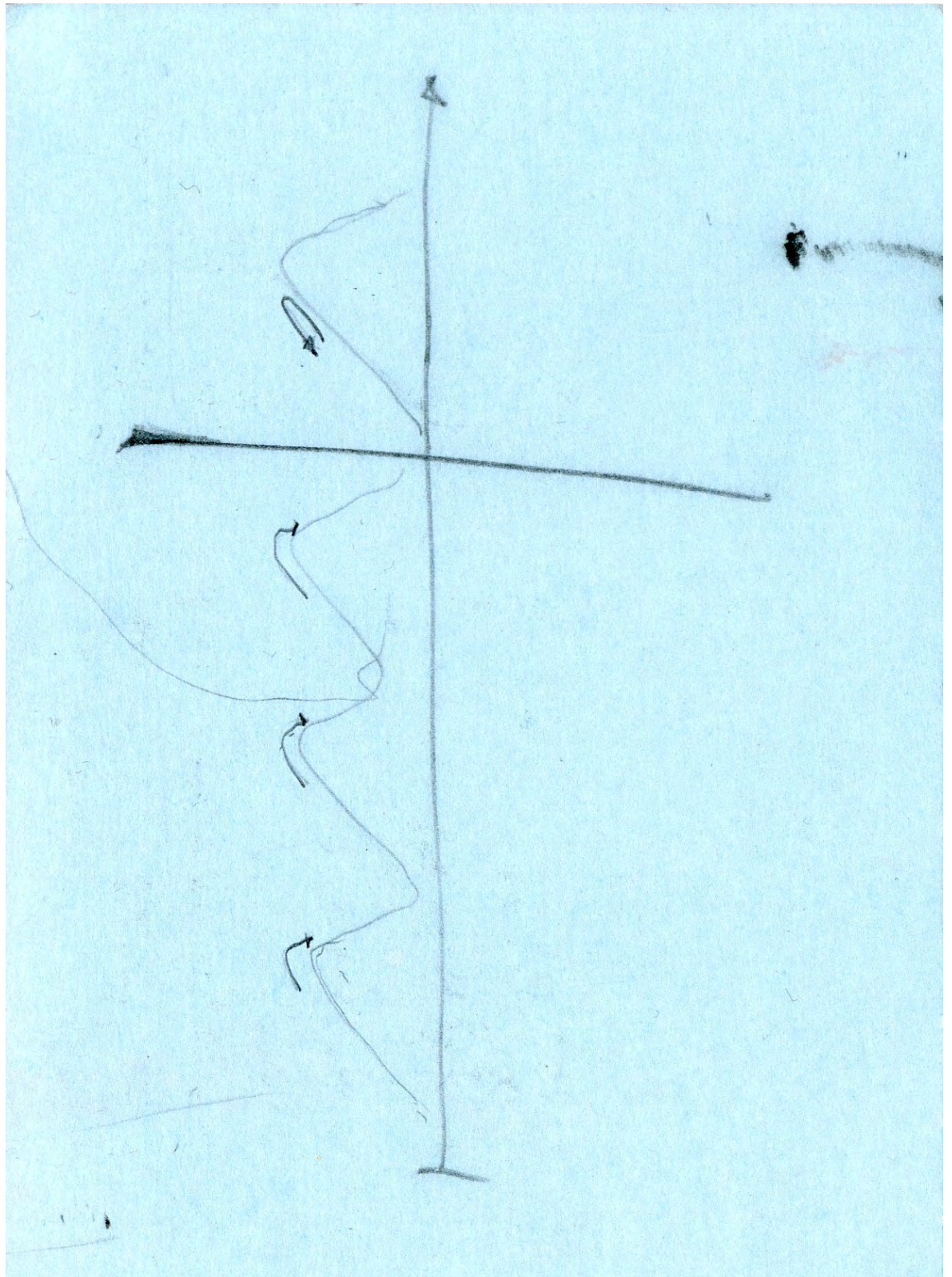


Figure 21 Hardliz, R.,
scheme showing Sisyphos' life
tricking he Gods and his final
trick that made the Gods
superfluous, sketch, 2011

Figure 22 Hardliz, R., A. Alessi, J. Holzer, P. Wolf, Kick off for the research project *Building Building* at HSLU self-documented with several cameras, synchronized and composed, still from video collage, 2011, video: the author, 2011



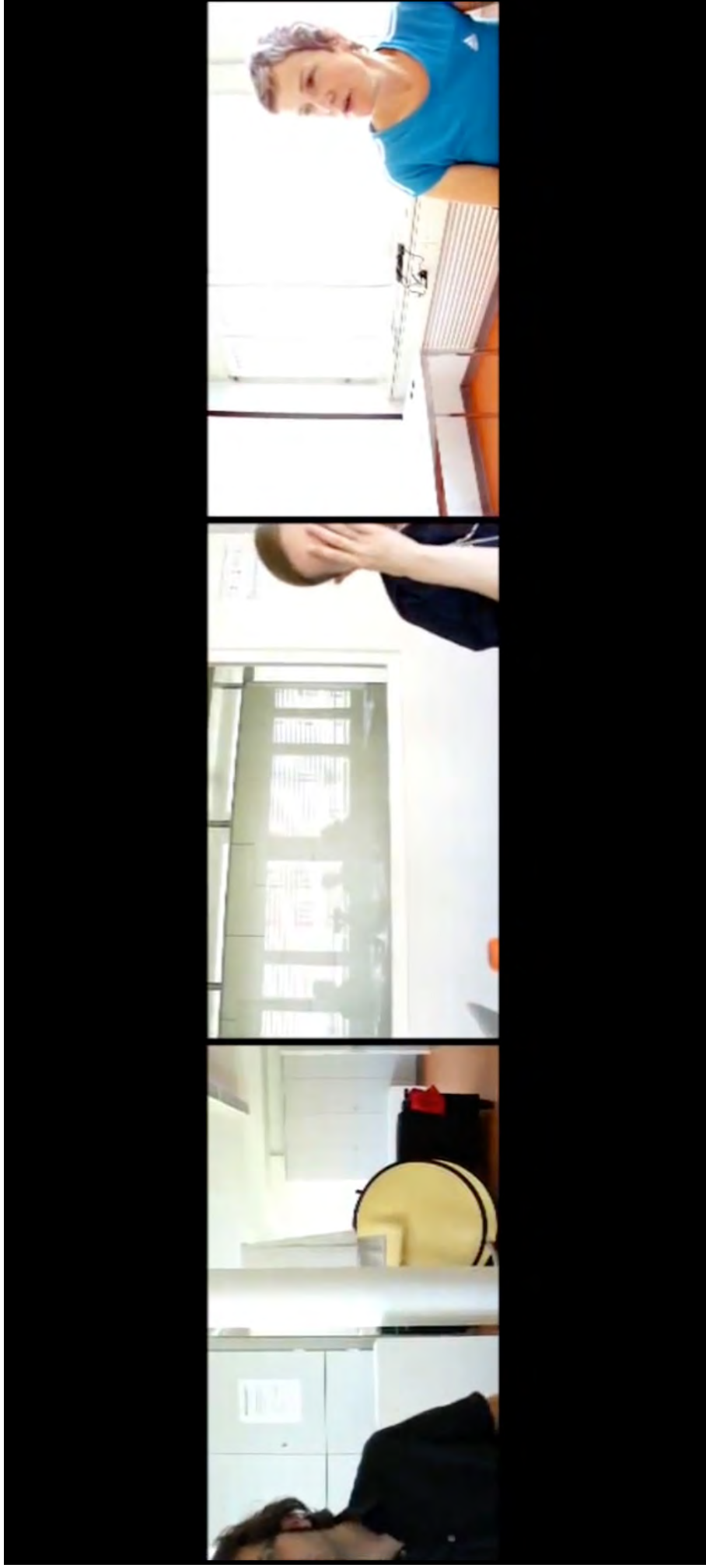


Figure 23 Hardliz, R., A. Alessi, J. Holzer, P. Wolf, Documentation of round table discussion of research project *Building Building* at HSLU with three rotating cameras, synchronized and composed, still from video collage, 2011, video: the author, 2011

Figure 24 Hardliz, R., A. Alessi, J. Holzer, L. C. Schuchert, Dolly shot through the 1:4 scale model for the conference held at the Swiss Architecture Museum SAM of the research project *Just Architecture?* at HSLU with a camera on a skateboard, stabilized, still from video, 2012, video: the author, 2012



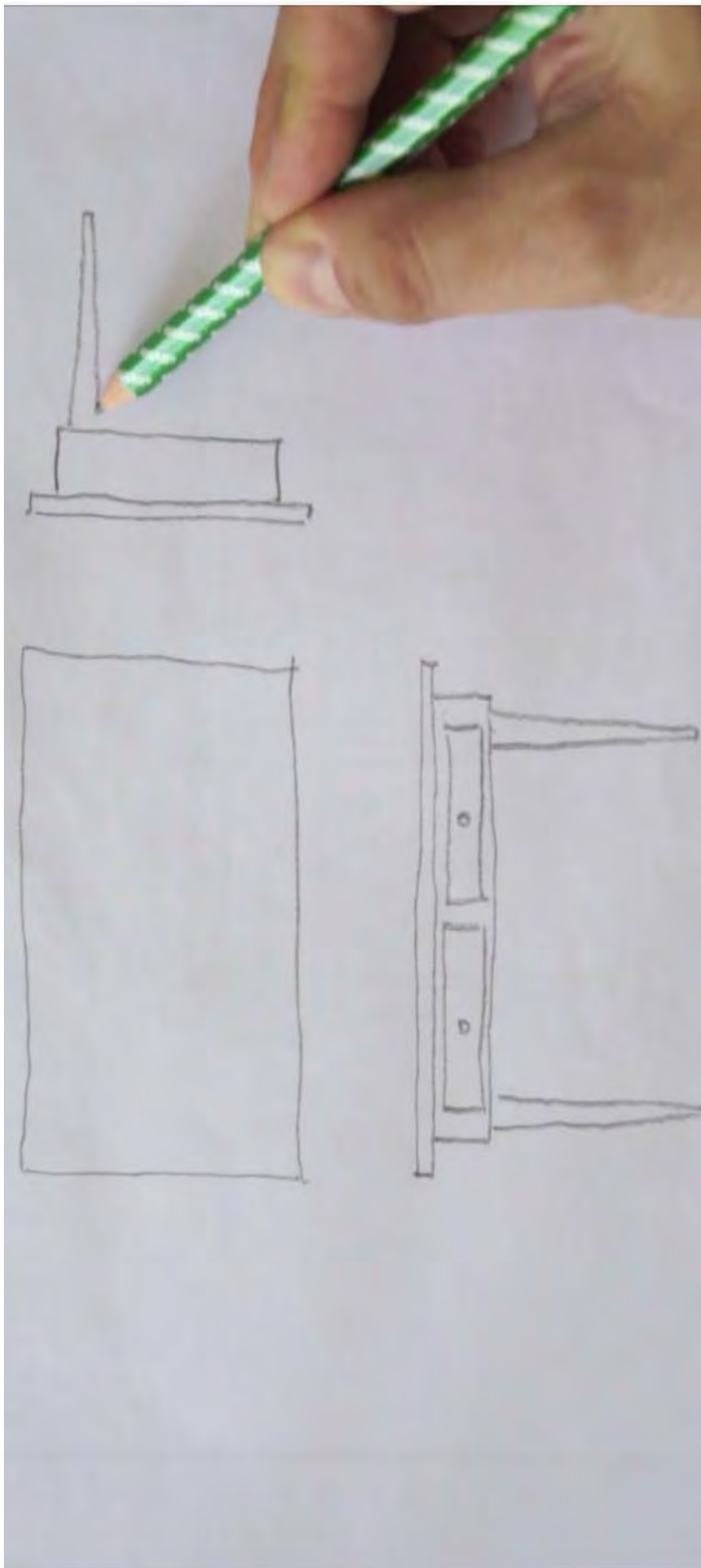


Figure 25 Hardliz, R., A. Alessi, J. Holzer, L. C. Schuchert, Drawing the different tables of content for the planned publication of the research project *Just Architecture?* at HSLU, still from video, 2013, video: the author, 2013

Figure 26 Hardliz, R., J. Harboe, J. Meissner, L. C. Schuchert,
Video call for the annual *World Ornamental Forum* held at the Kirchner
Museum in Davos, still from video, 2013, video: the author, 2013

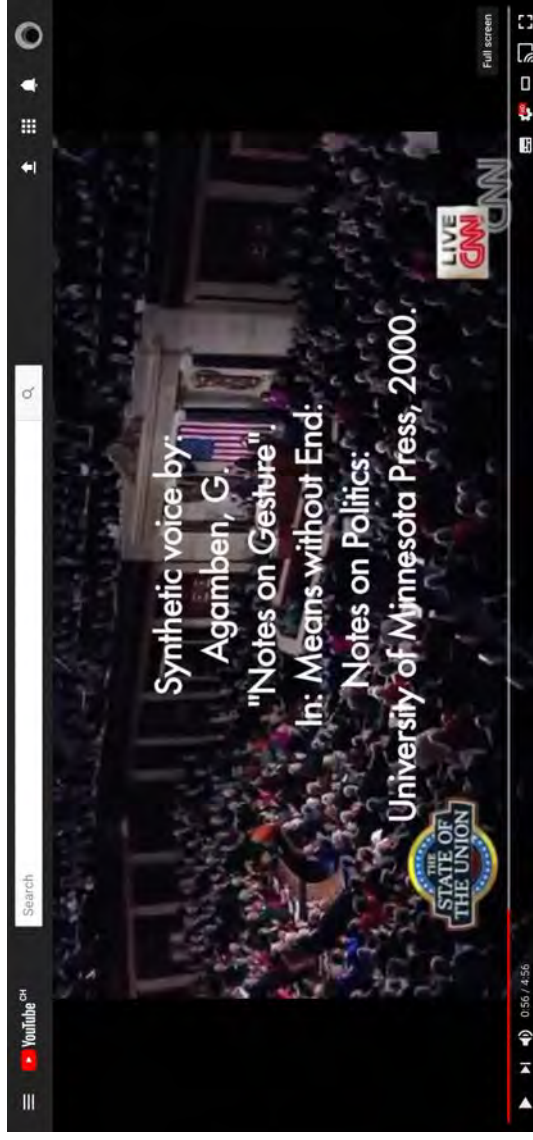


Figure 27 Idem

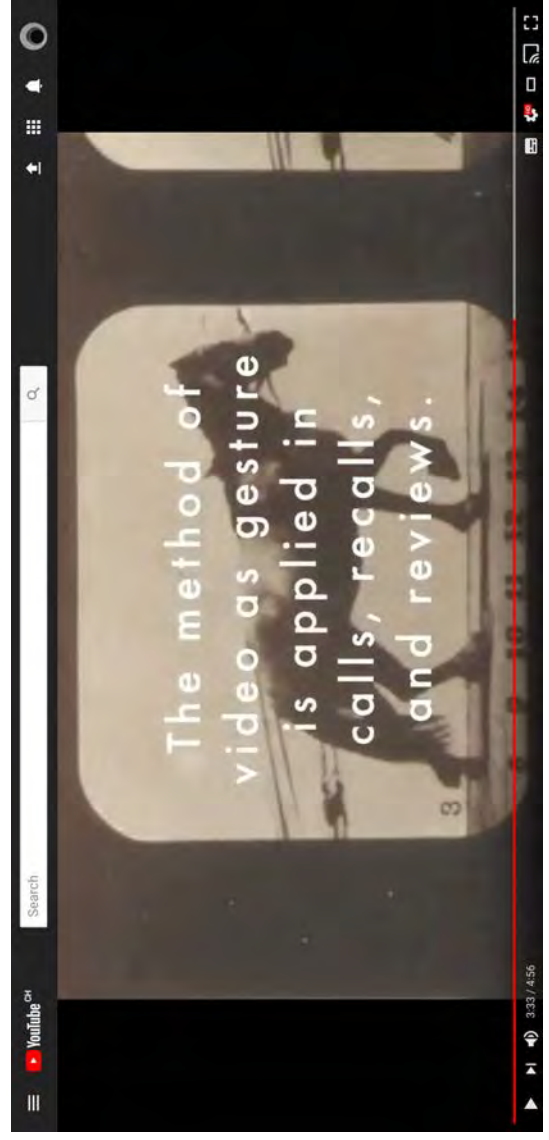




Figure 28 Hardliz, R., J. Harboe, T. Sadowsky, L. C. Schuchert, My presentation of Lascaux V (or The Birth of Art) at the *World Ornamental Forum*, still from video, Davos, 2013, video: Lilian Mattuschka, 2013

Figure 29 Hardliz, R.,
whatever Ph.D. encounters,
 Standing in front of
 Fridericianum of
 DOCUMENTA (13) waiting to
 encounter other Ph.D.
 students, video, Kassel, 2011,
 video: the author, 2011



Figure 30 Hardliz, R., Inverse model of my studio scale 1:10, wood and cloth, Berne, 2016, sewing by Salome Egger, 2016, photo: Salome Egger, 2016



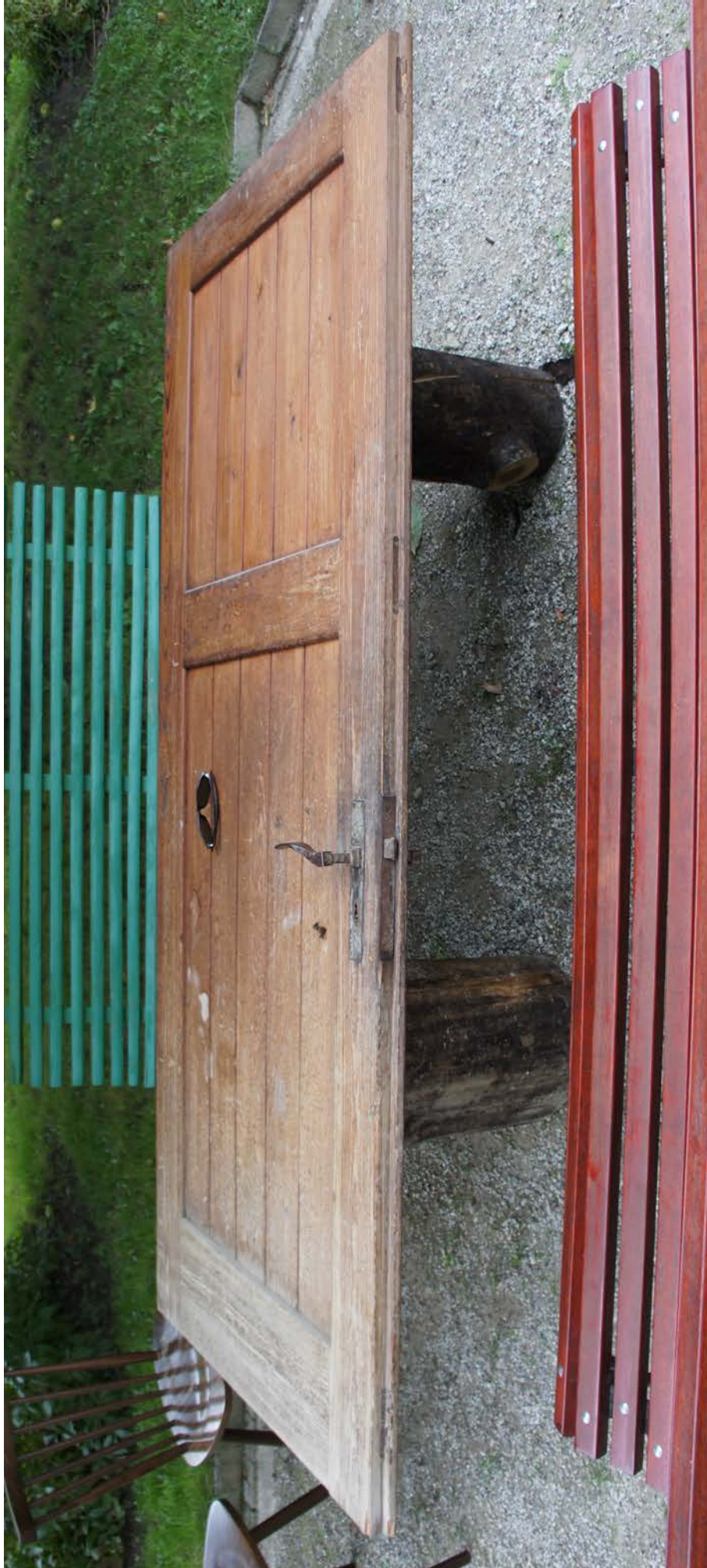


Figure 31 Hardlitz, R., *Model Workshop*, Door as table, table as door for a workshop in which Ph.D. students built models of their thesis projects, Sierre, 2014, photo: the author, 2014



Figure 32 Hardliz, R., *faire corps*, Exploring Foucault's *Utopian Body* for a paper by eliminating the senses of the head, video, Berne, 2015, video: the author, 2015

Figure 33 Hardliz, R.,
Taking Buildings Down,
 Application for the
 competition of the Storefront
 for Art and Architecture in
 New York by taking the
 competition down, video,
 Berne, 2016, video: the author,
 2016

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Figure 34 Hardliz, R., *A
 Portrait of the Artist Writing a
 Ph.D.*, Exploration of 'writing
 on a wall', video tryplüch,
 Berne, 2011, video: the author,
 2011









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Figure 35 Hardlitz, R., *Ornament as the Science of Passionate Disinterests*, Exploration of the forces of reading, video typlich, London, 2013, video: the author, 2013

Figure 36 Hardlitz, R., *At the Place of the Tattoo there was his Daughter's Drawing*, Collage showing work on *Das Loch II* and a photo of the tattoo, 2017, collage, photos: Patrizia Karda, 2010, and the author, 2014





Figure 37 Hardlitz, R., The wall to write on that was built in parallel to the walls of the space, the documentation of the writing which became *A Portrait of the Artist Writing a Ph.D.*, Berne, 2011, photo: the author, 2011



Figure 38 Hardlitz, R., *Cunning Attempts to Trick the Gods*, Vertical mirroring of Guercino's Sisyphos making the writing on the backside of the paper legible, collage, Berne, 2013, drawing: The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

ART: THE STUDY

We have become impoverished. We have given up one portion of the human heritage after another, and have often left it at the pawnbroker's for a hundredth of its true value, in exchange of the small change of 'the contemporary'. The economic crisis is at the door, and behind it is the shadow of the approaching war. Holding on to things has become the monopoly of a few powerful people, who, God knows, are no more human than the many; for the most part, they are more barbaric, but not in the good way. Everyone else has to adapt – beginning anew and with few resources. They rely on the men who have adopted the cause of the absolutely new and have founded it on insight and renunciation. In its buildings, pictures, and stories, mankind is preparing to outlive culture, if need be. And the main thing is that it does so with a laugh. This laughter might occasionally sound barbaric. Well and good. Let us hope that from time to time the individual will give a little humanity to the masses, who one day will repay him with compound interest.

(Benjamin 1999, 733)

Discourse

Expanding Field

We live and work in a world perceived as expanding and all comprising. Not only definitions of practices but practices themselves are liquefying and their contents have become questionable.³⁹ The practical dispersion of the contemporary art world is co-constitutive of and parallel to the global expansion of capitalism. This provokes fundamental questions, establishing an institutional milieu in (and outside of) which

³⁹ This chapter is an exploration of discourse that does not reflect the historical or contemporary studio practice analytically in terms of a survey, a selection of which would include writings such as: Cole 2003; Coles 2012; Davidis *et al.* 2009; Elkins 2009; Garnett *et al.* 2008; Kunst 2013; Read 2002; Rendell 2010; Slager 2012; Sullivan 2010; Trigg 2013; Wesseling 2011; Whitlaker *et al.* 2012.

these questions are asked. The questions reflect on the capacity and legitimisation of contemporary art as mode of knowledge production, which stands in direct relation to contemporary art's post-conceptual⁶⁰ character and its multiple and unstable installations.⁶¹

Debates range from questioning the place of art practice in a globalised neo-

liberal world and its mechanisms of control⁶² to the relevance of research related to art practice, its academic programs, and economic valences of knowledge.⁶³ Due to the

general difficulty of locating practices and to the legacy of conceptual art in

contemporary art, the character of such work is inherently discursive and spatial. It is discursive because it relates to the conceptual as the source of cognitive work, and it is spatial because first, the conceptual is an indicator of the dislocation of contents, and secondly, because global capitalism is an indicator of the dislocation of values.

Conceptually and dislocation define the *spatio-discursive* state where art-related

practitioners find themselves today.

My work is inevitably immersed in this state, not only since I embarked on the

project of elaborating a mixed mode thesis at Middlesex University. Even when I was

studying architecture in the 1990s and practicing until the mid-2000s writing and

speaking were always important loci of architecture. At the Swiss Institute in Rome in

2003 where I stayed until 2006 it became clear that the conceptual, rather than being

a field next to architecture, was another instantiation of architecture. I experimented

with different media – photography, painting, film, literature, installation, urban

intervention, performance, drawing, and digital imaging. Such dispersed dislocation of

practice indicates that what was happening was not a break with architectural practice

but a form of multiple instantiations of such practice in new fields. When I sent my

application for the fellowship at the Swiss Institute I was asked by an administrator for

which section I was applying: art or science. I was intending to do research on the

anonymous *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Colonna 1999) – an enigmatic architectural theory

⁶⁰ I draw on Peter Osborne's account of contemporary art's post-conceptual character. (Osborne, 2013)

⁶¹ I owe the localisation of the entry point of this chapter to Manuel Angel Maciá's thesis *Heterarchies and Missed Encounters*, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2016.

⁶² The work of Deleuze on the societies of control based on that of Foucault on governmentality is central for my use of neo-liberalism in the thesis. Rather than as an extension of the principles of capitalism, neo-liberalism is understood as an ideology with 'its own means of "taking care" of the self, though not for the self, but in order to render it entrepreneurial', as Spencer has put it. (Spencer 2016, 5)

⁶³ See: i.e. Claire Fontaine 2016; Dombos *et al.*, 2012; Gillick 2009a/b and 2011; Groys 2012; Holert 2009; Mahataj 2004 and 2009; Rogoff 2010 and 2015; or Vidokle 2011, to name just a few.

from the Italian Renaissance composed as a richly illustrated narrative of Poliphilo's 'strife of love in a dream' (Colonna 2003).⁶⁴ The aim and means of the research was creating and composing images and texts into the event of a new book by following the beloved *polis* through a 'strife of love in a dream'. It was uncertain if this project was 'art' or 'science'. (Hardill 2007) It so happened, by ticking the box 'art' on the application form my architecture practice expanded into the field of art. My incapability of partisanship with architecture or art (or science) does not signal vagary or indecision, retrospectively.

It is an example of what Irit Rogoff calls the 'expanding field, in which all definitions of practices, their supports and their institutional frameworks have shifted and blurred'. (Rogoff 2015, 41) 'But', she continues:

the fact that we have all left our constraining definitions behind, that we all take part in multiple practices and share multiple knowledge bases, has several implications.

On the one hand, the dominance of neoliberal models of work that valorize hyper-production have meant that [...] the expansion is perceived as a form of post-Fordist entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, the dominant transdisciplinarity of the expanded field of art and cultural production [...] is one of broader contemporary knowledge base and practices. (41)

What in each of these cases seems to be 'more' 'is actually a part of living through a major epistemological crisis'. (42) The 'hallmarks' of this epistemological crisis, Rogoff concludes, 'are not the trading of one knowledge or one definition for another more apt or relevant one, but rather the question of what happens when practices such as thought or production are pushed to their limits'. (42) Rogoff wonders: 'Do they collapse or do they expand? Can they double up on themselves and find within this flipping over another set of potential meanings?' (42)

⁶⁴ The protagonist Poliphilo falls asleep and dreams, and in his dream he falls asleep and has yet another dream in which, in search of his beloved Polia, he traverses landscapes full of emblematic architecture. The landscapes and gardens, the architecture as well as the garments of the protagonists, the rituals, the music and the food, etc. are all meticulously described, taking up most of the first book's space. The two lovers are finally gloriously reunited, however, in a dream's dream. In the second book Polia rehearses the story from her perspective in a much more sober tone, now set in a 'real' environment, although it's not clear whether her account is still part of Poliphilo's initial dream or not. Here Poliphilo dies of love, resurrects in Polia's arms and is reunited in the heavens with Polia. The language of the book is a vulgar mixing Italian, Latin and Greek, adding hieroglyphs and heraldic symbols as well as original inventions. Nevertheless, the book can be read as a practical architectural theory in as much as the ideal principles of architecture are richly illustrated in both images and an imaginative language that generate an experience of the space rather than merely describing it theoretically.

Rogoff offers a paradigmatic difference of the understanding of epistemic production, either as an expanding addition of knowledge or the more subtle but also more radical transformation of existing knowledge into a renewed meaning, which means that one can no longer be content with taking positions within a given definition, but one has to make it stretch and twist itself inside out to become significant again'.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The moves Rogoff outlines – double up, flip over, make it stretch, twist itself inside out – are moves of transformation she later in the text summarises under the notion of alternation. She speculates:

perhaps the necessary links between collectivity, infrastructure and contemporaneity within our expanding field of art are not performances of resistant engagement, but the ability to locate alternate points of departure, alternate archives, alternate circulations, and alternate imaginaries.⁽⁴⁸⁾

An important concern is the different understanding of representation either as a reproduction, multiplication, or illustration of the same, which happens when definitions are merely being traded for other definitions within a given system, or as an exiting of a given definition or knowledge. Changing one's practice due to the refusal of an existing knowledge or definition, looking for alternations: 'These are the hallmarks of an epistemological crisis', Rogoff claims, that risk 'a capacity for misunderstanding'.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Exiting a given definition rather than 'taking positions within a given definition'⁽⁴⁴⁾ one risks being misunderstood, as Rogoff explains. Moreover, isn't the capacity of transforming one's practice by exiting existing definitions always already dependent on the readiness of giving up one's practice, of risking an alternation not only of points of departure, archives, circulations, or imaginaries but, rather, of one's own capacities to the point of self-misunderstanding? Isn't here a radically unpredictable transformation of the subject at stake?

In the expanding field, in which multiplication and exchange are shorted in disjunctions from the actual alternations that overturn the singular values of disciplines and practices, one must think and rethink mutual dependencies between practices that never evolve independently or in isolated ways. The significance of the architectural for

⁶⁵ 'Trade' or exchange understood in terms of 'expansion' or growth are characteristic for capitalist economy of which the first principle is 'creative destruction of value' (Schumpeter 2013, 81-6). Following Joseph A. Schumpeter's economic principle knowledge is created by means of a preliminary destruction of knowledge. Destruction generates opportunity and makes space for new knowledge. Irit Rogoff's 'economy', on the other hand, whilst willing to change knowledge or definitions, does not discard them from the start but rather works on them until they eventually 'collapse'. 'Destruction' has a different quality here, since it is accommodated in transformation rather than elimination.

art should be re-evaluated considering parallel shifts in both disciplines. This is not done by a historical analysis of such shifts, but by locating alternate imaginaries for the architectural in and through alternate imaginaries of current art practices.

Spatio-Discursive Practice

Referring to the work of Boltanski, Holert underlines ‘the term *polis* has been chosen deliberately [for the research project “Art in the Knowledge-Based Polis”]⁶⁶ to render the deep imbrications of both the material (urbanist-spatial, architectural,

infrastructural, etc.) and immaterial (cognitive, psychic, social, aesthetic, legal, ethical, etc.) dimensions of urbanity. Moreover, Holert adds, ‘the knowledge-based *polis* is a conflictual space of political contestation concerning the allocation, availability and exploitation of “knowledge” and “human capital.” As a consequence, Holert concludes, ‘it is also a matter of investigating how the “knowledge spaces” within the visual arts and between the protagonists of the artistic field are organized and designed’. (Holert 2009, 8)

That he draws on the political aspects of the classic notion of urbanity, the *polis*, becomes clear when Holert suggests ‘that notions of “research” motivated by a sense of political urgency and upheaval are of great importance [because] positions that are criticized (and desired) as an economic and systemic privilege should be contested as well as (re)claimed’. (11)⁶⁷ Holert transfers the political aspect of the *polis* that exists in institutional economies onto artistic studio practices, arguing:

from (neo-)avant-garde claims of bridging the gap between art and life (or those modernist claims which insist on the very maintenance of this gap) to issues of academic discipline in the age of the Bologna process and outcome-based education, it seems that the problem of the art/non-art dichotomy has been displaced [...] into a question of how

⁶⁶ ‘Art in the Knowledge-based Polis’ is a research project at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna examining, according to Tom Holert, ‘how art might be comprehended and described as a specific mode of generating and disseminating knowledge [and how it might] be possible to understand the very genealogy of significant changes that have taken place in the status, function, and articulation of the visual arts within contemporary globalizing societies’. (Holert 2009, 8)

⁶⁷ To support his point Holert refers to ‘The Hornsey Revolution’, the occupation of Hornsey College of Art that was later incorporated into Middlesex University and of which the School of Art & Design, where this mixed mode thesis is being produced, is the direct successor. I will return to ‘The Hornsey Affair’ later.

to establish a discursive field capable of rendering an epistemological and ontological realm of artistic studio practice as a scientifically valid research endeavor. (8)

Holert reconfirms his interest not only in knowledge production but also, by drawing on the 'knowledge-based *polis*', in the space where such knowledge is produced.⁶⁸ Politics, it follows, is linked to both the production of discourse and the space in which such discourse is produced. Discursive practice is *spatio-discursive*.⁶⁹

Holert acknowledges the potentials and importance of spatial practice as well as its pit-falls, as when visual gestures turn into 'a mode of "pedagogical aesthetics"'. (Rogoff 2010, 42) It is not clear how discursive knowledge production in general and the 'epistemological and ontological realm of artistic studio practice' (Holert 2009, 10) in particular relate to space as a constitutive parameter beyond a contingent and inevitable (in)convenience. Spatial urbanity, for instance, is too often limited to a metaphorical understanding 'as infrastructure of networked, digital architectures of knowledge', that exists next to 'built environments'. (11) While it is essential to critically approach 'the contemporary knowledge-based city [as] structured and managed by information technology and database, and the new technologies of power and modes of governance they engender', (11) it is also indispensable to identify an adequate entry point to understand architecture literally as a generator of space and knowledge.⁷⁰

Holert gives possible entry points when he reflects on the genealogy of (spaces of) knowledge production. Drawing on Foucault's epistemology, he identifies a contemporary art practices, speculating about their potential for discursive practices and certain *positive knowledge*, which 'traverses':

the technical, material, and conceptual decisions [and] which could be "named, uttered, and conceptualized" in a "discursive practice". This very "positivity of knowledge" (of the individual artwork, a specific artistic practice, or a mode of publication, communication, and display) should not be confused with a rationalist transparency of knowledge. This "discursive practice" might even refuse any such discursivity. Nonetheless, the works and

⁶⁸ Drawing on Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, Holert calls such spaces 'knowledge space'. See Rheinberger *et al.* 1997.

⁶⁹ Compare with Henk Slager discussing Miwon Kwon's conception of discursive space arguing that 'both the art work's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are *subordinate* to a *discursively* determined site', (Kwon 1997, 92) thus 'space is understood as a discursive construct' (Slager 2012, 41 2). Also compare with Lefebvre's 'Spatial Practices' Kwon is drawing at (i.e. Lefebvre 1991).

⁷⁰ Only then it will be possible to go beyond the notion of construction in architecture that can be applied far too easily to the digital, to networks, or to systems in general. The systematics of any system can be associated to the constitutive systematic of architecture. How can architecture be determined today in order to provide an entry point to understand information in spatial, and thereby societal terms?

practices do show a “positivity of knowledge” – the signature of a specific (and probably secret) knowledge. (10)²¹

Although Holert notes that Foucault’s argument ‘appears to contradict [the] emphasis on non-knowledge, while simultaneously providing a methodological answer to the conundrum’, (10) a clarification of the relation between what Foucault calls ‘discursive practice’ and the elusiveness of contemporary artistic knowledge production is missing. Foucault distinguishes ‘the gesture of the painter’ from ‘the painting’, (Foucault 2010, 194) but today the discursive eliminates and reveals the gap between the production of the artwork and the artwork itself. The discourse seems to be the artwork and since discursive practice is how the ‘positivity of knowledge’ is conceptualised, discourse-as-artwork should be discussed as the positivity of the positivity of knowledge. If forced into a discussion of discursive practice, then the positivity of knowledge conceptualised therein reappears as a new positivity in the present discussion: as a positivity of that positivity of knowledge.

The Positivity of the Positivity of Knowledge

With Gillick’s bipartite reflection *Maybe it would be better if we worked in groups of three?* (Gillick 2009a/b) on ‘the discursive model of praxis [...] within the critical art context’ (a, 1) it is possible to examine the positivity of the positivity of knowledge and its spatial manifestations. First, it excludes any final modality (as, for example, a painting) emerging from discursive practice that could be ‘shot through [...] with a positivity of a knowledge’, (Foucault 2010, 194) except discourse itself. Second, by dividing the reflection in ‘The Discursive’ and ‘The Experimental Factory’, Gillick provides two parts that fit the two elements of a spatio-discursive praxis: discourse and space. According to Gillick, the ‘discursive model of praxis’:

is the offspring of critical theory and improvised, self-organized structures. It is the basis of art that involves the dissemination of information. It plays with social models and presents speculative constructs both within and beyond traditional gallery spaces. It is indebted to conceptual art’s reframing of relationships, and it requires decentered and revised histories in order to evolve. (Gillick 2009a, 1)

²¹ Holert quotes Foucault 2010, 193–4.

That Gillick gives a definition of the discursive model of praxis makes the example of this text potentially radical: it is not a discourse on any object whatsoever; rather, it is a discourse on discourse. This becomes clear when he underscores the necessity:

to examine the notions of the discursive as a model of production in its own right, alongside the production of objects for consideration or exchange. The discursive is what produces the work and, in the form of critical and impromptu exchanges, it is also the desired result. (2)

How do we distinguish in such discursive art practice between discourse as the 'desired result' and discourse as a meta-discourse that only suggests how discourse could itself function as a 'desired result'? As Gillick underlines the necessity of examining the discursive as a model of production in its own right in a critical art context, consequently, it must be asked if Gillick's examination is an artwork in such a context. Gillick indeed claims that discursive practice 'is the basis of art that involves the dissemination of information'. (1) His text therefore may be seen as an example of such art. However, as he claims, this art only *involves* the 'dissemination of information', suggesting that there is something else, some excess beyond the mere 'dissemination of information' that would define it as artwork.

Foucault, in the passage from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* to which Holert refers, suggests something similar:

Archaeological analysis would [...] try to discover whether space, distance, depth, colour, light, proportions, volumes, and contours were not, at the period in question, named, enunciated, and conceptualized in a discursive practice; and whether the knowledge that this discursive practice gives rise to was not embodied perhaps in theories and speculations, in forms of teaching and codes of practice, but also in processes, techniques, even in the very gesture of the painter. (Foucault 2010, 193 4)

Knowledge, for Foucault, is not limited to embodiment in the reasoning of language; 'discursive practice [...] is embodied in techniques and effects [...] at least', Foucault underscores, 'in one of its dimensions'. (194) What defines the painting or Gillick's text as an artwork is more than the knowledge conceptualised in discursive practice. The knowledge 'embodied [...] in the very gesture' (194) remains out of reach for archaeological conceptualisations, and it therefore possesses an artistically intriguing

form of ineffability.⁷² Accordingly, what makes an artwork an artwork might be found in

⁷² This reminds what Sigmund Freud says about the dream: 'There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a lapse of dream-thoughts which cannot be unravelled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown'. (2015, 525)

other dimensions of 'techniques and effects', presumably constituted by practices beyond 'the discursive'. Do such practices, which would have to be something like non-discursive practices, actually exist?⁷³

It might be argued conversely that language in the form of 'theories and speculations, in forms of teaching and codes of practice [is itself a] technique and effect', and that discursive practice may not be separated from non-discursive practices. Rather, embodiment gives rise to knowledge as practice. Discourse belongs to the realm of gesture from the start.

Foucault confirms that 'archaeology finds the point of balance of its analysis in *savoir*' – that is, in a domain in which the subject is necessarily situated and dependent'. (183) Bearing in mind that discursive practice is not only what archaeology explores but also its very method – discursive practice produces knowledge and knowledge (as *savoir*) is the concern of archaeology – it is understandable that Foucault distinguishes between '*scientific domains and archaeological territories*?' (183)

[T]heir articulations and their principles are quite different. Only propositions that obey certain laws of *construction* belong to a domain of scientificity [...] Archaeological territories may extend to 'literary' or 'philosophical' texts, as well as scientific ones. Knowledge is to be found not only in demonstrations, it can also be found in fiction, reflection, narrative accounts, institutional regulations, and political decisions. (183 4, my emphasis)

Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* can be read as a philosophical description of a method and, at the same time, as an exemplification of that method; a method researching discursive practice through discursive practice. From this perspective, there is no immediately apparent difference between Foucault's and Gillick's texts, in as much as they perform what they address. The positivity of the positivity of knowledge, in both texts, is a superposition, a fusion of two positivities of knowledge. There is an identity between the discursive practice as gesture and discursive practice as product.

⁷³ Such non-discursive practices also remind Spivak's question 'Can the subaltern speak?', (2015) which leads Hito Steyerl to ask, referring to Jean-Luc Nancy's questioning of 'work' as that which 'defines this inherently dispersed subject', whether 'the goal of a common language is also only a stumbling block that hinders our view of a common listening' (Steyerl 2007; Spivak 2008, 15-6).

From Architecture to: The Architectural

According to Gillick the discursive exists in a form that is a perpetually reformed model of a future possibility. The discursive allows being ahead of the realm driven by those market relations on which it is dependent. This model character of 'the discursive' bestows its lived semi-autonomy: embedded in the present and speculatively projected into the future. This semi-autonomy might be related to a double-spatiality, embedded in real space and speculatively projected into virtual spaces.

Gillick calls such double-spatiality 'free zones of real production', (4) which

consists of 'content heavy discussions seminars, symposia, and discussion programs

alongside every serious art project'. (4)

Yet the discursive as a form of art practice in its own right is not reliant on these official parallel events. It both goes beyond and absorbs such moments, making them both material and structure, operating openly in opposition to official programming' (4).

The absorption and trespassing of *constructed* moments and spaces by such discursive art practice transforms them into material and structure. Discourse is embedded in a constructed space and projected into a non-constructed space. Conceiving of

architecture as material and structure as opposed to and independent from construction defines architecture from its speculative potential as an operational material and

structure. Like 'the discursive', architecture would go 'beyond and absorb' (4) 'market

rationalizations', (2) turning them into speculative material and structure. Analogically to the opposition between the terms 'discursive' and 'discourse', the term 'architectural'

captures the *propositional character* of such a conception of architecture.

The architectural may also exist in a form that is a perpetually reformed model of a future, ahead of the realm driven by those market relations on which it is dependent. As the site of production today often exists within the text alone, (4) or as a text may be the only site from where the discursive evaluates, the architectural may evaluate from architecture alone. The architectural is the discursive character of architectural practice.

The Hornsey Affair: Lip Service vs. Changing the Situation

Gillick repeatedly points to a *before* as a spatiotemporal rupture in 'the discursive': i.e. 'the post-description of critical awareness'; (4) '[statements] provide a "location" from

which to propose a physical potential beyond the immediate art context; (4) 'at the heart of the discursive is a reexamination of "the day before" as a model for understanding how to behave, activate, and present; (5) 'the discursive is the only structure that allows you to project a problem just out of reach and work with that permanent displacement; (5)

Holert also draws on a *before*. Against the backdrops of art practice-led research and Ph.D.s, in universities, and of social, political, and economic engagements by the arts in the 'knowledge-based *polis*' he writes:

an adequate research methodology has to be developed in order to allow the researchers positions on multiple socio-material time-spaces of actual making and doing positions that permit and actually encourage active involvement in the artistic processes in the stages of production *before* publication, exhibition, and critical reception. (2009, 11; his emphasis)

Holert draws on the events that took place at Hornsey in 1968 in order to conclude that criticized and desired positions should be contested and claimed. For this a sense of political urgency and 'upheaval' (11) is important, according to Holert. Talking about upheaval, however, it is not clear whether Holert is actually suggesting that today's students of the School of Art and Design of Middlesex University, the successor institution of Hornsey College of Art, should re-occupy the school, as did the students in 1968, and make the occupation:

expand into a critique of all aspects of art education, the social role of art in the politics of design [and make it lead] to six weeks of intense debate, the production of more than seventy documents, a short-lived Movement for Rethinking Art and Design Education (MORADE), a three-day conference at the Roundhouse in Camden Town, an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, prolonged confrontation with the local authority, and extensive representations to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Student Relations. (3; Tickner 2008, 13 4)

The students' occupation of Hornsey College of Art in 1968 consisted in 'weeks of occupation and sit-ins, discussions, lectures, and screenings' (3). Drawing on a student's comment that uses rhetoric of 'self-empowerment' ('personally involved', 'dialogue', 'responsibility', 'respond vociferously', 'discussion', 'faces [that] were alight with excitement', 'talked more than they ever had talked before', 'something which was real', 'actively concerned', 'participate', etc.) (3, Students 1969, 38 7) Holert states that 'the discovery of talking as a medium of agency, exchange, and self-empowerment [...] may be [...] labelled as "research"'. (2009, 3) Furthermore, he puts forward that this necessity of a change in the system was based on 'the "disastrous consequences" of the "split between practice and theory, between the intellect and non-intellectual sources of creativity"', (5; Students 1969, 118) and on the need for a 'flexible training in generalized,

basic creative design that is needed to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances'. (16 7) Resonating 'the general changes within society and culture', (Holert 2009, 5) Holert writes that the claims for intellectual reflection and transformation of the environment 'had to become manifest in the very conceptual framework not only of art education, but of art discourse as such'. (5; Students 1969, 128)

In this light the Hornsey revolution marks a paradigmatic shift in the educational system based on a renewed self-consciousness of art practice as related to the contingencies of the real world and intellectual activity. As historical legacy the example of Hornsey as a speculative beginning of artistic research seems well chosen by Holert. However, if the antagonism exposed in the Hornsey revolution already contained the sense of political urgency Holert calls for, then where should political urgency come from today and where should it lead, in particular, since the revolution has already transformed the system by incorporating research and its relation to the practical world. The key to this problem may be found in a document from 1969 written by the students describing how research should be incorporated in art education:

As well as being on general problems of art and design (techniques, aesthetics, history, etc.) such research activity must also deal with the *educational process itself*. (5; Students 1969, 128 9)

Research is described in terms of being *on* technical, aesthetic, or historical problems, thus reopening the gap it was initially supposed to bridge by incorporating 'practice and theory'. (5; Students 1969, 118) What is incorporated, however, is a coexistence of practice and theory on a bureaucratic educational level, not in practice itself. The addition that 'such research activity must also deal with the *educational process itself*' is a weak reminder of the critical position that once propelled the revolution. What seemed to be a paradigmatic shift was just the kick-off for a development leading to what today Gillick calls 'discursive practice'. Research was merely *on* art, talking *about*, and Holert is stuck on that paradigm. He admits it indirectly:

it is somewhat contradictory to claim a critical stance with regard to the transformation of art education through an artistic research paradigm while simultaneously operating at the heart of that same system. I do not have any solution for this. (Holert 2009, 08)

In order to suspend not solve the problem of this powerlessness toward the system, the problem is generalised by Holert and equipped with an imperative, claiming that whoever 'enter[s] the academic power-knowledge system of accountability checks and evaluative supervision, [...] accept[s] the parameters of this system'. (8) Nevertheless, Holert is open enough to 'venture that addressing the power relations that inform and produce the kind of institutional legitimacy/consecration sought by such research

endeavours could go beyond mere lip service and be effective in changing the situation. (3) Holert's contradiction between a presumably absolutely imperative submission under the academic power-knowledge system and a hope for a transformative power is regrettable, particularly with regard to the importance Holert assigns to urban dimensions.

As a result, an exclusive inclusion of art practice into the system remains intact, present throughout Holert's text. Holert describes 'the artistic realm [as] the multifarious combinations of artists, teachers, students, critics, curators, editors, educators, funders, policymakers, technicians, historians, dealers, auctioneers, caterers, gallery assistants, and so on', (1) while simultaneously calling for the establishment of an particular 'artistic' studio practice that could be acknowledged as a scientific 'research endeavor'. (8) Art practice is put in a schizophrenic situation that Holert manages to resolve only by maintaining the division between the production of an artwork and the artwork itself, linking discourse with those stages of production that occur *before* art.

Temporal 'before' vs. Spatial 'before'

The nature of Holert's 'before' is the process before the object, the production before the product, completely disregarding the artistic character of discursive practice and its potentials. Consequently, Holert is incapable of naming the political urgency necessary for research, other than by an out-dated historical example. Due to his own setup of imperative submission under the system he is doomed to lament the 'increase in "standardisation," "measurability," and "the molding of artistic work into the formats of learning and research"', (1)

Gillick's 'before', in contrast, sets out rather as an *after*, as a 'post-description of critical awareness', (Gillick 2009a, 4) which 'over the last twenty years [...] has given us a lot of time to excuse ourselves, to qualify ourselves and to provide an *excess* of specific positions that are not necessarily in sync with what is presented in the spaces for art'. (4, my emphasis) Yet, Gillick advises 'to not look back too far'. (5) Since 'the discursive is what produces the work and [...] it is also the desired result', (2) its *before* is purely speculative and indifferent to actual spatiotemporal successions. It is excessive. Its exit from the system is possible due to a materialisation of the system, turning it into a material of 'the discursive' as a form of art practice.

The discursive has its 'before' within itself because in it 'we are constantly projecting [...] that something will lead to something else' at some point'. True work, true activity, true significance will happen in a constant, perpetual displacement'. (7)

Gillick gives this projected displacement a clearly *spatial* name: 'just-around-the-corner-ness'. (7)

Holert and Gillick build their arguments for political *urgency* or political *potential* in two similar assumptions: first, in an *entanglement between art and capital*,⁷⁴ and second, in a coexistence of presence and non-presence in art practice.⁷⁵ Holert situates both the art/capital entanglement and the contradictory spatiotemporality in art practice in the historical field of visual art while Gillick situates both in discursive practice. For Gillick there is no preparation necessary, no meta-discourse *about* discourse. The practice of discourse has its own materiality that can be analysed and made instantly productive in discourse itself.

Capital

Autonomous Art and Commodity Form

Drawing on Adorno's *Ästhetische Theorie* the philosopher Stewart Martin expounds how 'the absolute artwork meets *itself* with the absolute commodity', (Martin 2007, 18) contradictorily or reciprocally, concluding in an accordingly cyclic manner:

⁷⁴ Expressed either as the involvement of 'the knowledge-based polis' in 'the visual arts', (Holert 2009, 11) or as a 'parallelity' between 'a critical double' of 'a discursive frame' and 'the machinations of globalized capital'. (Gillick 2009a, 7)

⁷⁵ Either as a 'peculiar relationship between the *availability* and *unavailability* of artistic knowledge production' resulting from 'the constitutive dissolution (or suspension) of its subjects and media' 'within the visual arts', (Holert 2009, 10, my emphasis) or as 'the discursive framework [...] being simultaneously "*out of reach*" and "*too close*" [...] to the dominant culture' because 'it starts from the position of understanding the process of redundancy-via-flexibility, and it co-opts that process for different ends, in order to redirect its apparent loss'. (Gillick 2009a, 7, my emphasis)

New forms of commodification need to be examined as the heteronomous scene of new formations of autonomous art; new forms of art need to be examined as the contradictions of new formations of commodification. (24)

Martin underpins his answer to the question whether 'the insistence that we have entered some 'post-art' epoch [...] should not be recognized as the scene of new formations of art's autonomy'. (23) He argues 'If autonomous art is an immanent contradiction of the commodity form, it remains an inherent potential within a commodity culture'. (23 4)

This contradictory yet dependent relation between 'autonomous art' and 'commodity form' resonates with Gillick's discursive practice being simultaneously 'out of reach' and 'too close' to current working dilemma. (2009a, 7) Gillick's discourse, as an artist, arguing for 'the discursive [as] the only way to challenge the forces of self-redundancy, as it internalizes and expresses consciousness of [...] capitalism', (7) would expose the 'inherent potential within a commodity culture'. (Martin 2007, 24)

The term 'autonomy' seems inappropriate when artists urgently seek alternative forms for their engagements as a critical reaction to the apparent total commodification of the world by capitalist economic principles and neo-liberal management. Gillick's pledge for 'the discursive [as] the *only* way to challenge' (7, my emphasis) also reflects such urgency. Gillick's standpoint seems contradictory because the urgency expressed in the exclusivity of 'the discursive' tends to resolve the problem, even though this solution is an endless challenge. One is part of this total machine of commodification to such an extent that every attempt to escape from it turns immediately into farce. Possibly for this reason many artists develop a fundamental trust and self-esteem in their work, like an independent entrepreneur, preventing them from confronting the question of commodification. Maybe one should take the farce of escaping the machine seriously, that is to say, the adaptation and simultaneous redirection of indifferent managerialism.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ With regard to 'farce', compare with Agamben's use of the word 'gag' in *Notes on Gesture* (2000, 49 60) or his discussion of Bataille's 'negative articulation' in *Language and Death* (2006, 49 53).

As it is evident that the entrepreneurial paradigm is challenged by a managerial paradigm, it is legitimate to ask whether capitalism is still the dominant ideology to be fought. The managerial paradigm is characterised by the disjunction between social forces of production and relations of production. The use of the concept of 'project' in Gillick's discursive practice resonates the managerial paradigm. According to Bollanski and Chiapello, the managerial tool employed in order to reconnect or replace, the disjunctions generated by managerial innovations in economy was the project, or 'projections' of reconstructions in 'networks'. (Bollanski *et al.* 2007, 103 7) The disjoined projection of social forces into the *métier* of the artist has become problematic today, since the same disjoined mechanism functions for any work whatsoever.

Two models of production are in place today. In the first social forces of production are employed to produce numbers (e.g. forms, employability, clicks, certificates, etc.) that have nothing to do with what the work is actually producing (i.e. critically inventive practitioners rather than tailored workforces employable by the current industry; life-changing experiences rather than high numbers of participants in mediocrity; etc.). Meaning and time is evacuated from the actual work, and shifted from the exploitation of creative flexibility to the implementation of smooth redundancy.

In the second model relations of production are maintained, since goods still must be produced (e.g. exploitation of natural resources, food industry, etc.), but detached from social forces that would slow down productively (i.e. questioning the process of production even for the good of it).⁷⁷ These two models of production correspond to what Gillick refers to as 'suspension and repression [as] the dominant models'. (Gillick 2009a, 5) The first suspends meaning in a form of velvet bureaucracy, and the second represses meaning in a form of velvet slavery. There is slavery in the world that is anything but velvet, and the prospect of a total bureaucracy is far from velvet either. Nevertheless, often neither bureaucracy nor slavery are total with regard to contemporary working conditions. Rather, they are equipped with the mask of a 'human face'.⁷⁸ Bureaucracy is defined as the new relations of production for which the social

⁷⁷ Innovation is integral part of this system, since it serves the increase of quantifiable numbers of which quality is only one criteria among many other, such as winning over consumers, avoiding juridical problems, saving taxes, etc.

⁷⁸ The poet Václav Havel used the term 'velvet' in 1989 to characterise, or rather produce, the 'non-violent' and 'unbloody' upheaval against the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, referring to the term 'socialism with a human face' that was used in 1968 to describe the Prague Spring

productive forces now work, thus masking bureaucracy. In slavery social work forces are charmed and made efficient by generating the illusion of meaningfulness (e.g. by electing the employee of the month) and thus masking slavery. In order to maintain the integrity of social forces of production and relations of production workers are prepared to accept the incoherence of meaning perverted to the point that it becomes the new true meaning, i.e. when academics start believing that the quantifiable employability of their students and the number of publications reflects the quality of their education and research, or when cashiers in a supermarket chain take pains and pride to become the worker of the month.⁷⁹

Social Forces of Production

As the integrity between social forces of production and relations of production is restored, albeit on the basis of a perverted meaning, bureaucracy and slavery become indistinguishable. They suspend or repress themselves in a perpetual meaning of life independent of work. This is a hybrid state since it cannot be disrupted by accusations against workers, neither that they let themselves be exploited for the innovation of

events resulting from President Dubček's political reforms. Havel then became the first president of the new Czech and Slovak Federal Republic emerging from a transformation process of communist countries spreading throughout Europe.

Czechs sometimes praise themselves for being *too lazy to shoot*. Jaroslav Hašek's main character from his satirical novel *The Good Soldier Švejk* is doubtlessly the idol of this self-characterisation. Švejk represents the Czech people who during World War One had to serve in a conflict they didn't understand in the name of an emperor they didn't feel any loyalty to. Leaving the reader in constant doubt whether the idiocy and incompetence he displays in his enthusiastic faith to the Emperor is feigned, Švejk succeeds in a form of passive resistance to expose the absurdity of the Austro-Habsburgian military.

When Hitler arrived in Prague on the evening of 15 March 1939, after having extorted the signature of Czech President Hácha on a surrender document in Berlin only a few hours earlier, the Prague streets were deserted. And when the Warsaw Pact troops led by the Soviet Union occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968 to reinstall a conservative communist regime, mainly young people were initially successful in demoralizing the occupants by involving them in political debates and ironic chats in perfect Russian. These tactics, whether idiomatically satirical, depressed melancholic, or empathically cheerful, may if not originate then certainly sustain the cliché of the Czech people having a *ludic* drive. Not only they'd rather go have a beer than shoot – Švejk made an appointment at the pub 'at six o'clock in the evening when the war's over' – they'd also rather sing, make jokes, playfully display their *velevětnost* within the oppressive absurdity of life.

⁷⁹ Also see Frédéric Lordon's analysis of the workers' passion for their jobs in *Willing Slaves of Capitalism*, in a reading of Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* and the light he sheds on possible gradual shifts from capitalism to communism, i.e. on 'the forces of affect responsible, not for the local oddities of voluntary servitude, but for the permanence of universal "human servitude"'. (2014, 156)

products (since they innovate numbers) nor that they let themselves be employed to produce meaningless work (since the result of the work, and indirectly its meaning, is to give meaning to pure life). The pressing question that must be asked, consequently, is if the *ethos* of work is relevant for the fulfillment of life.⁸⁰

Today's form of work, simultaneously totally connected with the production of numbers and totally disconnected from the production of the actual products, produces an ethically unresolvable situation of stress for the worker. The worker is forced either to accept the meaning of meaningless as liberation from productive exploitation and as the fulfillment of work redundancy and pure life, or to forcefully re-establish the place of meaning in the actual product and the social forces of production, thus re-

establishing the problem of flexibility and the exploitation of creativity connected to it. Because of the projection of social forces of production into what might be called the *coincidence of bureaucracy and slavery*, the artist's work today faces analogous dilemma, which Gillick articulates as a counter-method: 'we've had flexibility and now we have redundancy, yet we refuse to stop working'. (Gillick 2009a, 7)

The artist's refusal to stop working, the work of art's irreducible task, corresponds to both sides of the worker's dilemma of neither equipping redundancy with meaning nor reinstalling flexibility into work: the artist keeps meaningfulness operative as meaningfulness, refusing both redundancy and flexibility.

Useful Uselessness : Useless Usefulness

Discursive practice is a logical form for an autonomous art able to simultaneously 'fetishistically insist on [its] coherence, as if [it] were the absolute that it is unable to be, (Adorno 2013, 310) and include 'art's heteronomous determination' as written or spoken 'self-critical dialectic with anti-art, or 'post-art'. (Martin 2007, 23) In other words, the self-critical dialectic of which discursive practice consists makes it insist on 'the rationality of its irrationality'. (Adorno 2013, 310 1) As if it were a turnaround, Gillick's discourse on discourse, rather than advocating, empathically fetishises 'delusion by insisting that otherwise art would not exist'. (310)

⁸⁰ Compare to and contrast with Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, Michel Feher, Gerald Raunig, or Maurizio Lazzarato, and others. The point here is not to establish a theory of political economy but rather to set the scene for *spatio-discursive* art.

Can you feel it?

Just as Baron Munchausen saved himself from drowning by pulling on his own hair, today art must extract itself from its heteronomous determination to a seemingly unprecedented degree'. (Marlin 2007, 23) The problem is to realise (in a work of art) that this is 'too close' to current working conditions and simultaneously absolutely 'out of reach' for them. Today, when everyone is Baron Munchausen, art has the task to insist on use-value not by means of uselessness, but by means of usefulness, hence anti-art, and turn that means into a useless end.⁸¹

Who could tell if Anlon Vidokle's essay 'Art without Work?' is a work of art? Vidokle

lengthily narrates how the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija 'did most of the cooking?' for a

'meal/discussion space' for 'conversations on contemporary art'. (2011, 7) Vidokle notes:

spending most of his time in the improvised backyard kitchen allowed Rirkrit to not engage in the conversation and to not speak or answer questions about his art, which is something I think he does not like to do. When asked if what he was doing is art, Rirkrit said no, he was just cooking. (7)

This account might be applied to Vidokle's own current discursive practice of writing an article on the significance of work in art. Is it art? No, it's just writing. Vidokle reflects on Tiravanija's work:

what happens here is that rather than speak or work in the capacity as an artist, Rirkrit prefers to make himself very busy doing something else in the space of art. Furthermore, not unlike the Factory [of Andy Warhol], yet dispersed amidst many different art venues and dates, Rirkrit's activity manages to temporarily construct a rather peculiar set of social relations between those in attendance. While he displaces the art object and the figure of the artist from its traditional place at center stage (to the kitchen), perhaps reflecting Duchamp, his presence usually forms a quiet yet influential and shape-giving center for those present. Rirkrit does manage to produce art while not working in the capacity of an artist, yet to do so he really makes himself very busy: he works very hard doing something else. (7)

⁸¹ Compare with the introduction of the editors to the reader *Intellectual Birdhouse—Artistic Practice as Research*, which unfortunately ends without an answer: 'There is fictionness in the "knowledge economy" as compared with the reality of art, and who would have thought that art would become the link to reality in a world that is losing its grip in the name of knowledge? So how does one sufficiently limit the definition of artistic research so as to develop epistemic claims while not breaking its own modes of making and thinking? The answer is: we don't know'. (Dombbois *et al.* 2012, 13)

Similarly, Claire Fontaine in their essay on *Our Common Critical Condition*, in which they recall Allan Kaprow's reflection of his own work, write:

"When you do life consciously, however, writes Kaprow in 1979, life becomes pretty strange paying attention changes the thing attended to so the Happenings were not nearly as lifelike as I had supposed they might be. But I learned something about life and "life". (Claire Fontaine 2016, 3; quoting from "Performing Life," in Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996, p. 19)

"This conscious, reproducible life, imprisoned by quotation marks, (Claire Fontaine 2016, 3) recalls the contradictory but inherent entwinement of the artwork with commodity, in as much as the quotation marks make life reproducible as the commodity "life," and not as life. Strictly rejecting 'a return to the paternalist dictatorship of modernism, with its ludicrous religion of the autonomy of art' (3) Claire Fontaine laments in clear effervescent language:

we live like this with no hope for political change (however necessary) in our lives, nor a common language capable of naming this need or allowing us to define together what is particular to our present. This condition is new, no doubt unique in Western history; it is so painful and engenders such a profound solitude and loss of dignity that we sometimes catch ourselves doubling the sincerity of artworks that are created under such conditions for we know that their fate is uncertain, and will most likely disappoint. (3 4)

Nevertheless, they conclude in an all the more willing tone:

the field of art has never been so free, vast, and attractive to the general public and this is perhaps precisely what makes our present condition a profoundly critical one. (4)

Research

Known-Construction

Research in art, and more specifically Ph.Ds. in art, has seen an inflationary culmination of descriptive and tentatively defining formulas, the listing of which would not only be necessarily incomplete but also completely unnecessary. Research in art does not have to be conceptually defined in order to practically exist. The recognition of the

increasingly unmanageable literature dealing with issues around the definition of artistic research seems intrinsically doubtful, particularly with regard to my spatial take on discursivity. Although many of these texts provide insight on what researchers actually *do*, it is of interest to detect how the non-definability of artistic research serves as the tentative core of a definition and to parallel it with the self-defining attempts of current discursive art practices.⁸²

"Many of us must feel we've been doing "artistic research" for years without quite calling it that, as Sarat Maharaj puts it, continuing: "whatever we feel about this, we cannot wriggle out of unpacking what we mean by research in contemporary visual art practices and art education" (2004, 39) or what we don't mean by it. Some voices stand out, including Maharaj's own, who in a conversation with Annette Balkema says why he

think[s] [...] art's consciousness studies and artistic research matters today and why it's not just another university phenomenon is that it is about creating the scenario in which we learn to listen to the other [...] where the other will not be heard entirely as [Gayatri Chakravorty] Spivak has put it. [...] What sound will create the sonic constitution which begins to produce that subjectivity, the feeling, that consciousness in which the engagement with difference and otherness begins? [...] feeling, emotion and subjectivity. It is those very things that have been taboo. (Balkema *et al.* 2004, 159)

The intrinsic link between 'artistic research' and 'contemporary visual art practices', to use Maharaj's terms, and the intrinsic link between 'discursive art practice' and 'current art', to use Gillick's terms, span the vector space in which we levitate. Discursive art practice would be, in Maharaj's terms, an artistic research practice as 'work in progress' where the echo-word 'progress' connotes succession, sequence, possible fulfilment. Joyce's twister 'progress' implies that some final, full bulk of the project is never quite attained, we are always at a 'preparatory' stage just short of its total gross state. (40)

Compare this with Gillick:

True work, true activity, true significance will happen in a constant, perpetual displacement [however] this permanent displacement provides a location for refusal and *collective* ennui. (2009a, 7, my emphasis)

To conceive of 'the discursive' as a 'listening' rather than speaking, as what generates such collectivity, and with it spatiality, whether in the context of 'artistic research' or 'current art', might shift the forces of the active vectors towards a common trajectory.

⁸² A selection of literature on artistic research would include: Balkema and Slager 2004; Elkins 2009; Macleod and Holdridge, 2009; Melrose 2002; Sullivan 2010; Dombois *et al.* 2012; Badura 2013; Caduff 2010.

Imagine the chronology the other way round, artistic research preceding art practice, then an artistic researcher now becoming an art practitioner might say, paraphrasing Maharaġ: 'Many of us must feel we've been doing [discursive art practice] for years without quite calling it that'. (Maharaġ 2004, 39, altered)

The questions artistic research and current art ask, as described by Maharaġ and Gillick, are the same. Both are 'out of reach' and 'too close' to their respective contexts, which represent the condensation surface of capitalism as 'the dominant culture', the 'machinations of globalized capital', and equally, the 'other' to which one must listen. The abstract concept of capitalism never exists as such, it always condenses on actual deeds, such as the academy or the art world, the factory, the state, or the family, and so on. When Maharaġ asks which sound will create a subjectivity of otherness this may be understood as a resonance in the artist's feeling and consciousness that takes up a process and redirects its apparent loss, as suggested by Gillick.

It can be said that 'in [an artistic research] frame there is always an element that parallels the machinations of globalized capital – that is both its strength and weakness'. (Gillick 2009a, 7, altered) From this alteration we can see what artistic research can learn from 'current' discursive art practice, namely, that political potential stems from art functioning as a structural parallel to contemporary working dilemmas in the dominant culture'. (7)⁸³ Artistic research also functions as such a structural parallel.

What then, in turn, can 'current art' learn from artistic research? In many ways the multiplicity, plurality, diversity or mess of issues, methods, objects, questions, etc. that proliferate in artistic research correlate with the abundances of the contemporary art world in which, according to Claire Fontaine, 'every artist develops his or her own language and nurtures the impression of being the only one to speak it'. (Claire Fontaine 2016, 3) The "arbitrary", they denounce the ill of this situation: 'behold the name of the troublesome guest that was soon to invite itself into all art writing and every exhibition space around the world, with no plans to leave'. (3)

The same holds true for artistic research. In absence of the political potential of the discursive framework the arbitrary befalls artistic research as an 'unnamed activity'. (Maharaġ 2004, 39) However, Maharaġ argues, 'it is, in Samuel Beckett's words, more of

⁸³ This point has also been made in comparison to Holert's text. Saral Maharaġ is aware of the 'political urgency' present in the 'political potential' of the artwork, which therefore does not need the necessity of a political urgency external to it. The reason to repeat the point here is to reflect on how 'otherness' reflects on discourse, how the destabilizing moments of research may be inherent to current art, and how this possibility links to Liam Gillick's notion of 'semi-autonomy'.

an “unnamable” because it has to invent its own methods each time rather than parrot pre-given ones”. (39) As unnamable, rather than unnamed activity, it keeps the political alive as potential in order not to end.

Nevertheless, the ‘arbitrary’, which Claire Fontaine evokes, still reverberates in Beckett-*via*-Maharaj’s ‘unnamable’, that seems to survive in the mere method-on-the-go, in each and every single step of this permanent revolution. Can the arbitrary become critical when being reduced to infinitesimal unnamable postponents?

Infrastructural Dignity

The critical point consists in remaining wary, as Rogoff puts it, about such ‘multiplicity’ and its ‘limits’. She suggests thinking of it as ‘an epistemological crisis [...] from which to think the notion of an emergent field’, rather than ‘expanding field’, because:

an epistemological crisis would allow us to think not competing interests but absent knowledge, it would allow us a proposition that would say that if we were able to find a way to know *this*, it might allow us to not think *that*. So it is a question of the loss or the sacrifice of a way of thinking, as opposed to the cumulative proliferation of modes of operating. (Rogoff 2015, 45)

This is a complex argument for an inoperative operation, an operability not by the means of a creative destruction, but rather a destructive creation, in which ‘a proposition’ of ‘a way to know’ enables a ‘loss [...] of a way of thinking’. (45) Rogoff relates this operation to infrastructure by considering ‘working without the means of a dignifying infrastructure’ an ‘impovertised condition’. (48) It is the lack of infrastructure that leads to ‘the cumulative proliferation of modes of operating’, (45) which Rogoff opposes. Coping with the proliferation of the arbitrary then would mean to ask how it is possible to find ways of creating the means of a dignifying infrastructure, or an infrastructural dignity, able of countering a condition of neo-liberal management that is forcefully destroying infrastructural means of production for the sake of the reproduction of capital. Foregrounding new knowledge as opposed to shifts in modes of thinking, Rogoff suggests:

we might reflect about what the absence of infrastructure does make possible, which is to rethink the very notion of platform and protocol, to put in proportion the elevation of individual creativity, to further the shift from representation to investigation. (47)

Beyond an epistemological crisis, an ontological crisis would allow us to think absent beings as propositions that would say that if we were able to find a way to be *this*, it might allow us to not do *that*. Rather than opposing the ontological crisis to the epistemological as a specifically artistic one in a spatio-discursive practice both crises converge. A specific artistic way of knowing/being can redirect the loss of a way of thinking/doing.

Discursive Art Practice: The Young

Barthes in a scantly noted introduction to what he called 'a special issue of *Communications*'⁸⁴ takes 'the group of its authors' as a pretext to reflect on '[the issue's] unity, at least its original unity':

these are all students, recently committed to research; deliberately collected here is the first work of young researchers sufficiently free to have determined their research project themselves and yet still subject to an institution, that of the third-cycle doctorate. (1989, 69)

The issue does not 'explore a body of knowledge or [...] illustrate a theme', and nor does Barthes. Instead he 'discuss[es...] mainly the research itself, specifying that it is 'a certain research, research still linked to the traditional realm of arts and letters'. (69)

Although what is at stake in Barthes' text is not 'artistic research' or 'discursive art practice', the link to the 'arts' is central to his discussion, because 'the task (of research) must be perceived in desire', (69) and 'for desire to be insinuated into my work, that work must be *demandé* of me [...] by a living collection of readers expressing the desire of the Other'. (70) This demand or desire, which can only be 'formulated outside the institution', Barthes claims, 'can only be the demand for writing'. (70) This desire for writing links writing to the 'realm of arts and letters'. (70)

Barthes observes as specific to the *young* researcher, a researcher 'on the threshold of his work, that 'the student experiences a series of divisions'. (69) Economically, socially, or intellectually, the student 'belongs to an economic class

⁸⁴ *Communications* is a French thematic journal created in 1961 by Georges Friedmann, Roland Barthes and Edgar Morin on the studies of mass communication and semiotic analysis, and more recently anthropological-social studies.

defined by its unproductiveness, she or he 'is excluded from any nomination, and 'has not yet [...] the availability of communication'. (69) Most importantly, however:

as a *researching* subject, he is doomed to the separation of discourse: on the one side the discourse of scientificity (discourse of the Law), and on the other, the discourse of desire, or writing.⁸⁵ (69, own translation)

What is at stake is the coincidence of 'writing' with both 'the discourse of desire' and 'the student "of letters"'. (70) Although for Barthes 'the discourse of desire' should apply 'broadly, institutionally, to the student', (70) he takes 'the student of "the letters"', literally, or the student of the arts, generally, as the potential paradigm for a 'broader' and 'needed' change, 'that it is not his competence or his future function that is needed, but his present passion'. (70)

Passion is linked not to the future consolidated capacities and merits of a senior researcher, but to the present capacities – or incapacities – of the young subject and to their desire and writing. Moreover, assuming that the task of research is desire, we can conclude that research is intrinsically linked to the subject being *young*.

While for the youthful researcher such passionate research is intrinsic or unavoidable it poses a challenge for the senior researcher. The translators of *Jeunes Chercheurs* into English anticipate this challenge by choosing the formula *Research: The Young*, as if research would immanently bleed into youthfulness, as if for the senior researcher passionate engagement in research would mean to subject oneself to rejuvenation. The task is to not confuse the passion that lurks behind every economic interest with the young passion of 'unproductiveness', lack of 'nomination', or lack of 'communication'. The difference is that for the young the interest, or rather the desire, is expressed by 'the Other'. Rather than the forces of one's own passionate interest which are directed outwards pushing the subject into the world, there are passionate forces pulling the subject inward into the world. Such pulling desire is not an interest. It is opposed to the passion of economic interests. The Other is not 'a collectivity seeking to guarantee my labor and to gain a return[, an interest,] on the loans it grants me'. (70) The desiring Other is 'a living collection of readers'. (70)

⁸⁵ The original text reads: 'il est voué à la séparation des discours' (Barthes 1984, 103) and the translation by Richard Howard reads 'he is *dedicated* to the separation of discourses'. (Barthes 1989, 69) Although the translation is correct, the meaning of the French original, *voué*, seems more ambivalent between the rather active 'dedicated' and the clearly passive 'doomed'. Since what is at stake here is what is unavailable to the student due to his status as young subject, the passive form seems to be more appropriate. The translator of the German edition Dieter Hornig has decided to opt for a passive interpretation: '*fallt* er der Trennung der Diskurse *anheim*', (Barthes 2006, 92) which could be translated as: he *falls prey* to the separation of discourses.

The young researcher, and particularly the young researcher of art and letters, feeling the demand of the Other expressed in the desire to read, can develop an intrinsic disinterest in 'the control of the Law', thus allowing, or forcing her or him:

to extract the 'ego' from its imaginary hull, from that scientific code which protects but also deceives, in a word to cast (*sujet*) the subject (*sujet*) across the blank page, not to 'express' it (nothing to do with 'subjectivity') but to disperse it: to overflow the regular discourse of research. (71, original French added)

In such happy and cheerful, but *illegal* dispersion of one's ego 'across the blank page' (with regard to the discourse of the Law), the research 'manages to link its object to its discourse and to dispose our knowledge by the light it casts on objects not so much unknown as unexpected'. (75)

For Barthes this 'dispossession of knowledge', entailing a space of possibility where the 'known' object may appear in 'unexpected light', is crucial for society,

because 'it is at just this moment that research becomes a true interlocution, a task in behalf of others, in a word: a social production'. (75)

Discourse, as research, is a social production through which existing knowledge can be dispossessed. Non-academic discursive art practice can learn from doctoral artistic research that such dispossession is both intrinsic to the arts and typical of the young, taken that doctoral students are by definition immature, irrespective of their age. Discursive art practice from the point of view of the desire for writing that is being demanded by a collection of readers, must be perceived as a practice of rejuvenation. Nothing to do with age, we can call discursive art practice using the formula of the

translators of Barthes' text: The Young.

Contingency

Rejuvenation Machines

Passionate or young research is 'utopia', writes Barthes, 'for we realize that society is not ready to concede this happiness broadly, institutionally, to the student'. (70) Why then,

as Mahara'y's says, today 'doctoral programmes in visual art practice [are] being steadily constituted all over?' (2004, 39) Is it possible to sustain the argument that the

constitution of artistic research is just the unimaginative outcome of a bureaucratic

transformation process of higher education (i.e., Bologna) in which despite the evident neo-liberal mechanisms of control nobody would have wondered: *What on earth is the*

point of artists doing academic research? Isn't there a chance to think that nowadays there has been some change in society that would actually, finally, concede such happiness to the student, and if not broadly then at least singularly to the artist student of artistic research? If yes, what would be the societal urgencies of such rejuvenating research?

Barthes generally attributes to society the capacity to concede happiness. In 1972, however, when Barthes's text was written, society does not use its capacity. Why then society was not ready to concede happiness to the student? Why today, in conditions of indifferent managerial machinations of globalized capital, it seems ready to do so?

Another set of questions should be directed to the specific role of art in such

young research. Barthes profits from the duplication of 'the traditional realm of arts and letters', in as much as this realm, in order to address the issues of reading, writing, and academic discourse, addresses text by text. Barthes 'imagine[s] that a *free* reading might become, finally, the norm of "literary studies"'. (72) This freedom is 'not just any freedom', Barthes says insisting that 'the spontaneous is the field of the already said'.

(72) Rather, 'the freedom "staged" in this issue is':

the freedom of the signifier: the return of words, of word games, and puns, of proper names, of citations, of etymologies, of reflexivities of discourse, of typographies, of combinative operations, of rejections of languages. This freedom must be virtuosity: the kind which ultimately permits us to read within the support text, however ancient, the motto of all writing: *it circulates*. (72)

This circulation of all texts – which *is* 'the discursive' – links literature to literary studies and, potentially, to all research. With such artistic virtuosity associated with research in general the particular case of artistic research faces the problem of how to maintain an artistic *ethos* – an artistic way of doing – in a conception of research that has adapted artistic virtuosity as the freedom of its discursive practice. The recognition of such a redoubling of artistic virtuosity is important in order to be still able to differentiate artistic research from research in 'the traditional realm of arts and letters', (72) and from research in general.

The question is not only if artistic research is granted by society today – to say

that there is a social urgency and relevance for it – but also how the social urgency and the correlated social production of research connect to artistic practice, the field in

question. What can artistic research achieve socially? If the purpose of research is 'social production', then artistic research should not only ask, in the words of Gillick, if 'it would be better if we worked in groups of three', (2009a, b) but it should also exemplify this question in its own research.

The philosopher Marcus Steinweg unpacks the line from the all-encompassing contingency of existence to the specific function of contingency in art. There seems to be a tripartite division; according to Steinweg: reality is contingent; awareness of reality is the experience of transgressing it; a 'work [of art] is aporetic because it draws its intensity from an opening toward a boundary it affirms instead of transgressing it'. (2012, 186) Art is not originally contingent, it rather retains or maintains contingency.

The artistic virtuosity of the circulation of all texts, transforming research into social production, is then less a mediation of aporetic experiences into artefacts. On the contrary, it is art's aporetic experience as artefact. While this artistic virtuosity is not unique to art, art may be the only domain where it is indispensable. While any other young researcher *can* access the discourse of desire *qua* their youthfulness they have the option of an exclusive discourse of scientificity to 'insure' a career promotion'. (Barthes 1989, 69) Artists cannot opt for the discourse of scientificity alone because such discourse would necessarily dispossess them from the aporetic experience indispensable for their specifically artistic work *ethos*.

In consequence, artistic researchers face the dilemma of being forced into a discourse of desire and a social production which despite its artistic virtuosity is an end outside art and, simultaneously but contradictorily, being forced to produce an artefact in which the object is exactly not linked to its discourse to appropriate research for different ends and redirect its apparent loss, as Gillick has put it.

To avoid the artistic inadequacy of the irony of a discourse indistinguishable from a discourse of scientificity and the redundancy of a discourse indistinguishable from a discourse of desire and socially, the only artistic way out of the dilemma seems to have to fetishistically insist on the adequacy of either one of the two forms of discourse.

In art the experience of the awareness of contingency is not initiated as 'a flight across (*survol*) that remains in contact with what it flies across'. (Steinweg 2012, 184 5)⁸⁶ This would be the meaning of the awareness of reality as the experience of transgressing it. Art, on the contrary, 'affirms' the boundary of contingent reality by ending the contact to its transgression, that is, by ending the contact with what it flies across. It ends the experience of transgressed contingency, however, not by falling into contingent oblivion, but rather by retaining the experience of transgressed contingency. The result seems contingent, as if it came out of the blue, and simultaneously relates to real experience: this is its *aporia*.

A paralysed society incapable of, or rather prevented from experience of transgressed contingency, however, is increasingly less capable of grasping art's aporia because it cannot grasp the artwork's relation to real experience. The artwork necessarily appears 'arbitrary', since what shines through is only the contingent. In order not to become indistinguishable from the contemporary contingent reality of a society that seems impoverished of experience art must, instead of presenting the experience of the end of experience – suspending the experience of transgressed contingency in an artefact – present the experience of the end of the end of experience. Art would then have to present the experience of experience; however, the end of the end of the experience would have to be part of such an art experience.

We have located the source of the confusion of 'contingency' and 'arbitrariness' here. In a world impoverished of experience the experience of contingency, whether transgressed (in life) or affirmed (in art), must appear arbitrary. If this is the case and the arbitrary is indeed indistinguishable from contingency, then the task can be to do what we do in such a way that it always matters, no matter what it is.

⁸⁶ 'That is the meaning of the *survol*, the "flying-over", in the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari [...] Instead of fleeing reality, the subject intensifies its contact with it by distancing itself from it'. (185, fn. 6)

Forget Agamben, or On Contingency

Agamben has attempted to generate a practical experience of contingency in *The Coming Community*:

Quodlibet is not 'being; it does not matter which', but rather 'being such that it always matters'. The Latin always already contains, that is, a reference to the will (*libet*). Whatever being has an original relation to desire. (Agamben 1993, 1)

To put the rule to the test one would have to ask in what way is the book *The Coming Community* itself a 'being such that it always matters'. Testing Agamben and his text for the sake of the current study, I suggest that in 1990 he wrote the book as an example of what it has to say, that is, not just saying something but also providing an experience of what it says, however, adding the experience of its end, to its end, only in 2001 in a Postilla entitled *Tiqun de la noche*. Unfortunately this reflection is missing in the English translation, which has been published in the meantime. The Postilla ends with the words:

Inoperativeness [redundancy] does not signify inertia, but *katargesis* – that is, a work (operation) in which the *how* completely substitutes [embraces] the *what*, in which life without form and forms without life coincide in a *form of life*. The exposure [projection] of this inoperativeness [redundancy] was the work (operation) of this book. It coincides perfectly with this postilla. (Agamben 2008, 93. own translation with alternative readings in square brackets)⁸⁷

The *what* of the book (inoperativeness) is 'substituted', or rather 'embraced' by the *how*: not only the book is *about* inoperativeness, it also is *by means of* inoperativeness. The book as a 'form of life', constitutes inoperativeness by means of inoperativeness: it is inoperative. Just as society is becoming redundant by the managerial paradigms of our time, the book is fated to become indistinguishable unless it produces a signature that 'has absolutely nothing to add', which is the end of the end, but it is there nevertheless. This is the task of any good postface, to 'demonstrate how the author has absolutely nothing to add to his book'. (gr; own translation)

⁸⁷ Agamben's texts are precise not just in precision but also in imprecision. A general translation seems to contradict his task. Agamben added the postilla only after Michael Hardt's translation was published. This gives the opportunity to translate and inject the significances that seem relevant to the study. Agamben's Italian original reads: 'Inoperosità non significa inerzia, ma *katargesis* – cioè un'operazione in cui il come si sostituisce integralmente al che, in cui la vita senza forma e le forme senza vita coincidono in una forma di vita. L'esposizione di questa inoperosità era l'opera del libro. Essa coincide perfettamente con questa postilla'. (Agamben 2008, 93)

In this sense, it is not anything whatsoever that suffices to be proclaimed as art in order to be art, in which the proclamation rather than the work becomes the fetish. Rather the task of art is

to talk saying nothing, and to move without making – or, if you want, to ‘recapitulate’, to undo and save it all [which] is the most difficult thing: (gr; own translation)

To ‘recapitulate’ is not just to repeat or to summarise, generating a difference between repetition and the repeated. Rather here it means doubling up on itself, undoing by reinvesting its own debt, saving by borrowing on itself.

Artists who are already in the state of redundancy and invested in the state of the end of experience are forced, rather than to capitalise on it, to devalue this state by reinvesting their incapacities in the state: to take the current state, in which they are immersed, and to ‘recapitulate’ it, by ‘moving without making’, ‘talking saying nothing’. This is not to say that what is being recapitulated was not saying something or making something in the first place. However, in a state in which recapitulation as an experience of the awareness of contingent reality has ceased to exist, in which recapitulation has literally capitulated into mere debt, art becomes a recapitulation of headlessness.

‘Whatever’ and ‘Any-Space-Whatever’

This echoes Mahara’s notion of non-knowledge, or rather ‘*non-knowledge-activity*’, (2009, 1) as he points out, since his research targets method. Non-knowledge is that which cannot be known in advance, for in art practice and research ‘method is not so much readymade and received as “knocked together for the nonce” – something that has to be invented each time with each research endeavour’. (2)

Mahara also draws on Agamben’s idea of ‘whatever’, which is always to be understood as *quodlibet* being, as ‘being such that it always matters’, with an intrinsic relation to will and desire. With this idea of ‘whatever’ Mahara underpins the ‘intrinsic condition’ of art practice and research, its “singularity”. (3) Doubtlessly art practice and research has, Mahara argues:

a force in its own right, always incipient in ‘whatever’ spaces – windswept, derelict brownfields and wastelands – where intimations of unknown elements, thinking probes, spasms of non-knowledge emerge and come into play. (3)

'Distinct from the circuits of [scientific] *know-how*' the force of art practice and research is for Maharaj 'the rather unpredictable surge and ebb of potentialities and propensities – the flux of *no-how*'. (3) Acknowledging Beckett for the term, Maharaj concludes: '*No-how* embodies indeterminacy, an "any space whatever" that brews up, spreads, inspissates'. (3)

Maharaj uses Deleuze's notion of 'any-space-whatever' just a few paragraphs earlier as a jump board to access Agamben's "'whatever" [...] as a more digestible, more spelled-out version of a methodological alternative to the "universal/particular" polarity'. (2) Deleuze seems to offer a more empirical 'frame by frame' (3) use of 'any-space-whatever' to reappear in the *no-how* indeterminacy of art. Indeed, considering the indeterminacy of method in art practice and research one may be well advised to look at each and every work separately. Is this not precisely the space of the particular, the empirical? Deleuze's endless lists and categorisations and sub categorisations are a strategy towards the emergence of the singularity of 'any-space-whatever'. The problem of the singularity of the work of art, though, is located elsewhere – *in* the elsewhere.

We could look at 'whatever' and 'any-space-whatever' as the two experiences of contingency, the first transgressing it in life, the second affirming it in art (or cinema, the restricted field of examination Deleuze takes as his research paradigm). For Agamben, 'the manner in which [whatever being] passes from the common to the proper and from the proper to the common is called usage – or rather, *ethos*'. (2009, 19) Whereas for Deleuze, '[any-space-whatever] is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, its principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible.' (2012a, 113)

As such a pure location of the possible 'any-space-whatever' contains political potential, however, this alone does not constitute 'any-space-whatever' in art. Even 'the simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality', (Agamben 2009 43) is enough for 'ethics [to] become [...] effective'. (43) It is the 'virtual conjunction, the de-homogenized singularity opening to the infinite that recreates a space of potentiality, however, as 'a genetic or differential sign'. (Deleuze 2012a, 113) Correspondingly, Deleuze says:

there are two kinds of signs of the affection-image, or two figures of firstness: on the one hand the power-qualitatively expressed by the face or an equivalent; but on the other hand the power-qualitatively presented in any-space-whatever. (113)

The 'face' here seems to be the 'figure' of the 'firsness' of 'whatever' as a potentiality or the 'prior condition of all actualisation'.⁽¹¹³⁾⁸⁸ Whether there is a connection or not, Agamben 'broaches' ['whatever'] as a modal oscillation illustrated by the example of the human face [with] its constantly changing liveliness, its vivacity', as Maharaj notes, (3) 'an ambiguity of its expressions which', for Deleuze, 'always suit different affects'.⁽¹¹³⁾ We could say that Agamben faces the face in his book while in the postilla, the postface or *postface*, he re-faces it, thus generating a space that is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, its principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. (Deleuze 2012a, 113)

Moreover, the coincidence of the postilla with the book as

a work (operation) in which the *how* completely substitutes (embraces) the *what*, in which life without form and forms without life coincide in a *form of life*; (Agamben 2008, 93 own translation) it is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible. (Deleuze 2012a, 113)

If Agamben's book together with the postilla generates any-space-whatever, then this indeterminacy, according to Maharaj-*via*-Beckell, is embodied by *no-how*.

This *no-how*, in the strict sense of the 'no', is not a 'how' anymore. It is as if the forces that were in play for the generation of the 'power-quality' of any-space-whatever were dispersed, out of reach and lost (or saved) forever. In spatial terms, where are they? They are *no-where*. *No-how* should be understood in the sense of 'nowhere', as an analogy to 'where have you been?' nowhere!; 'how did you do that?' nohow! In this sense any-space-whatever contains all the possible 'elsewhere' and, as an any-means-whatever is generated by all the possible 'otherwise', it coincides with all possible 'forms of life'.

Catastrophic Times

What is no-how and the generation of any-space-whatever in a decapitated state of debt, in which the circuits of *know-how* become shorter and shorter, virtually dissolving into no-how themselves?

⁸⁸ This facial equivalence also reminds Cacciari's project of the 'Metropolis [in which] every place is equi-valent in universal circulation, in exchange'. (1993, 200)

'Contemporary art' is contested today on the basis of what is being done under this label. Gilllick proposes the 'current' artist as accountable for what is currently being done in art practice because what is being done *currently*, in a step-by-step mode of small projections, and *con-currently*, parallel to the machinations of global capitalism.⁸⁹ For the sake of the architectural, however, the *contingent* artist seeks ways to not construct recapitulations, spaces from where recapitulations construct themselves.

The research of these spaces is the task of the contingent artist and of this work. It is not the A-side of art, but its B-side. In the middle of a global redundancy it tries to locate points of resistance and refusal, i.e., the Ph.D. in art, and co-opt its political inoperativeness for its own ends. It opens up its political potential. B-art will be because B-art is the art that is the place of its future becoming: model, infrastructure, gravitational field, architectural contingency, consuming and consummating it between the walls of the street. To B and to not B, B-art is always already: B-art'll be.

The B-art of B-ing

Maharaj warns us that the 'interact[ion] with established discursive-academic circuits and think-know components should not lull us into seeing 'the discursive' as the only or the prime modality of "thinking through the visual". (4) This is diametrically at odds with the primacy Gilllick gives to 'the discursive' because it is, according to him 'the only structure that allows you to project a problem just out of reach and to work with that permanent displacement'. (Gilllick 2009a, 5)

For Maharaj, 'alongside ['the discursive'] runs its intensive non-discursive register, its seething para-discursive charge and capability both its 'pathic' and 'phatic' force, its penumbra of the non-verbal, its somatic scope, its smoky atmospherics, its performative range'. (4)⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Another example for the constellation of 'contemporary art' is the term 'actual' in the name of BAK, *basis voor actuele kunst*, which accounts 'for the dynamic and critical role of art in society, and for a 'discourse' with and through art as a form of active knowledge' on the urgent social and political issues of our times' (BAK website accessed April 15, 2017: <http://www.bakonline.org/en/Basis/About>).

⁹⁰ The suffix '-pathic' from Ancient Greek *pathos*, 'suffering' or 'feeling' as for example in 'empathy' connects to the suffix '-phatic' from Ancient Greek *phatos*, 'spoken' as for example

Gillick's proposal to "hide within the collective" (2) 'regenerating among its own kind', (7) by 'project[ing] a problem just out of reach and to work with that permanent displacement' seems to be related to the 'agglutinative mode' Maharaaj proposes. Maharaaj refers this mode to Marcel Duchamp and Deleuze as "stick on" processes of figuring forth, of constellating assemblages'. (4) This is a figuring forth, not a figuring out, like Gillick's 'permanent displacement' that 'provides an infinite suspension of critical moments'. (7)

Is the first 'hot' and the latter 'cool'? Why is the former drawing on the 'performative range' while the latter calls it 'the opposite of performance'? Maharaaj offers an entry point, though negatively, when he denounces 'visual thinking' as 'those approaches to the visual that treat it predominantly as an "image-lingo" – basing it on a linguistic model'. (4) 'Its impact', Maharaaj claims (and I agree) that 'is to restrict the visual to verbal-discursive legibility', thus resulting in a 'talking over and above [the visual]' (4) rather than mulling it over. What Maharaaj does not consider, at least not explicitly, is the opposite, basing discourse on a visual model, neither the visual as grammatically nor the visual as agrammatically, but language, or thought, as image.

The Destruction of the Image of Thought

When Deleuze in the chapter entitled 'The Image of Thought' of *Difference and Repetition* writes that 'something in the world forces us to think' and that 'this something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*', (Deleuze 2012b, 176) then this clearly resonates with Maharaaj's 'room for the "other" to put in an appearance in his or her own terms'. (5) Nevertheless, I remain sceptical with regard to 'the humble conjunctive form and+ and+ and+...' Maharaaj evokes, even if 'its components are linked together by no more than a lick of glue'. (5) It may be 'no more' than a 'humble' 'lick of glue' too many in which every 'add+' is 'suspended' in the next in a purely sequential form. It is not clear to me whether the matter here is the destruction of Hegelian

Aufhebung or its affirmation.

in 'emphasis' by means of the noun 'pathic', the passive male partner in anal intercourse. Passion and boldness, closeness and distance, touch and virginity vibrate in an erotic relationship of show and hide, give and take. Going for a blow one would want to ask if the seductive 'penumbra' of the 'smoky' steam bath 'atmosphere', in which every unexpected encounter marks the potential origin of unexpected pleasures, 'should not lull us' into seeing the 'non-discursive' or the 'para-discursive' as the only way of touching on what is not visual.

Deleuze writes:

Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misosophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the *relative* necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the *absolute* necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself. (175–6, my emphasis)

Forget Deleuze, or On Forgetting

In another short statement Deleuze writes that 'form will never inspire anything but

conformities'. (170) Thought is a form, an image, however, 'an image of thought that presupposes itself' must be destroyed in order to generate 'the conditions of a true

critique and true creation'. 'The act of thinking' must be generated 'in thought itself'. Thought must be forced 'to raise up and educate'. It must bring forth the 'absolute

necessity' of such an act of thinking. However, thought cannot force itself; it can only ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks' – thinking that is conform to a

presupposed image of thought. Rather, thought must be open to 'the contingency of an encounter' with something that has the power to force thought. This something is

'violent' and belongs not to the order of thought; it is 'misosophy'.

What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. (176)

'In this sense', Deleuze concludes, 'it is opposed to recognition'. (176) Since it cannot be

recognised, it does not make sense. We have to make sense of it. This is why it makes sense to say: $A=A$ does not make sense; only $A=B$ (or C or any other character) makes

sense because it can only be sensed and we are forced to make sense of it (unless we

realise that there is never a second A equal to the first and that therefore the equation

$A=A$ is something of what we must make sense of each and every time). To make sense

is to make the 'affective tones' sensible, perceptible, imaginable, recognisable. Before

that, however:

the thought which is born in thought, the act of thinking which is neither given by innateness nor presupposed by reminiscence but engendered in its genitality, is a thought without image. (207–8)

Experience and Poverty

Opinionatedness vs. Ecstasy

It is in this sense of an imageless image of thought that the origin of Deleuze's thought, although it distinguishes itself, appears not to be difference, but rather indifference. Indifference forces us to encounter, to think, and to make sense – and to make a difference. Deleuze insists that 'difference is not diversity'. (280) It is precisely not the 'constellating assemblage' as a constellation of many sequential or even consequential diverse 'and+ [...] *ad infinitum*' (Maharaj 2009, 5) but infinity itself that opens up in each and every encounter.

The liberation of discourse from conceptuality leads to an exploration of the criteria that make an artistic practice a critical discursive one. I am intrigued by the difficulty of making art today. This difficulty regards the questions of this chapter: the seeming expansion of the field, discourse as the contender of art, the nature of knowledge in art (and whether 'knowledge' is the applicable category through which the problematic issue of *community*, in relation to which art always must define itself, can be addressed), the location of the work of art, the definition of an artistic *ethos*, the problem of commodification, the structural similarity of contemporary work's redundancy with the work of art, the problematic of use and immanence. This difficulty also regards some of the possible answers approached: research as the Promised Land, dignity as a counter-model of possession, rejuvenation (and maybe *rejuvenation* as opposed to *voiding*?) as a form of acceleration (and maybe, necessarily, inflicting *clearance* as opposed to *voiding*?), contingency as the now illegible yet only legitimate realm of art, and therefore catastrophe and forgetting.

Assuming there is a difficulty of making art today, does it constitute a difficulty for the work of art and, also, for the artist being an artist? If so, then one would rather leave the field. This would be an exit but one made under existential presuppositions,

taking all the conditions for today's difficulty of making art as a given, necessarily forcing an exit: an emergency exit.

What if the difficulty of making art today does not constitute a general difficulty for the work of art and for the artist being an artist, then the question becomes: What is the question? Making art becomes a form of standing outside art, however, as a form of existing as an artist and the work that is being done existing as a work of art. There is no outside, but there is a way of standing outside *as* a way of standing inside. This is not an existential exit in the sense above: it is, rather, an exit that exists without preconditions, without having to oppose existing conditions. Inasmuch as this exit is not related to a *move* outside – it opens an outside within the inside, making the opposition irrelevant – it is static exit, or rather, ex-static exit: ecstasy. It is as if one would neither ask the question 'What is art?', nor claim anything whatsoever as art. The difficulty of making art today is acknowledged but one can easily ignore it by asking (or not asking but listening to or sensing) what the question is; not asking the right questions; but sensing questions.

If *wisdom* is a way of hiding melancholia, then *opinionatedness* is the signature of the incapacity of dealing with such depression – I am tempted to add: that's my opinion. I am giving in to this temptation not because I understand myself as a particle in an immanent mass forced to express an opinion. Rather, I am sceptical of the wise. Where is the watershed between incapacity and capacity, those who don't see and those who do? If wisdom is a way of expressing the knowledge of melancholia – the wise knows about the melancholia that has befallen society, but does not say so directly, only indirectly through wisdom – then one must ask, again, as Jean-Luc Nancy did in *The Inoperative Community*, referring to Bataille, whether 'knowledge' is the applicable category through which the problematic issue of *community*, in relation to which art always must define itself, can be addressed. Bataille expressed it in the question: 'why must there be *what I know?*' (1988, 109; quoted by Nancy in: 1991, 5)

'The rupture (*déchirure*) hidden in the question', writes Nancy, 'is occasioned by the question itself'. (6) The question breaks with something in itself in a way that is comparable to the phrase "Don't touch me" [, which] is a phrase that touches and that cannot not touch, even when isolated from every context', (2008, 13) as discussed by Nancy in *Noli me tangere – On the Raising of the Body*. The one who loves and says 'Do not touch me', says, more literally, "'Do not wish to touch me'";

You hold nothing; you are unable to hold or retain anything; and that is precisely what you must love and know. That is what there is of a knowledge and a love. Love what escapes you. Love the one who goes. Love that he goes. (37)⁹¹

Know the knowledge that escapes you. Know that it is unknowable. In this question is hidden', says Bataille, 'an extreme rupture, so deep that only the silence of ecstasy answers it'. (1988, 109)

The Passivity of Passion

A work of art can say 'Do not touch me', demanding from the one who gets in touch with it to demand from it to be touched by untouchability. Can a work of art be demanded and produced as a response? Or is a work of art, rather, always the work of art's demand to be demanded as that which cannot be demanded? Is that which cannot be demanded the untouchable the work of the work of art? Instead of calling the work of art artworks should we say, rather, that in the work of art art works?

Nancy, referring to Bataille (and Maurice Blanchot), challenges 'work' as the domain through which the 'inherently dispersed subject' (Sleyerl, 2007) can be defined today, or through which community can 'arise'. (Nancy, 1991, 31) Hito Sleyerl, referring to Nancy, suggests that 'perhaps the goal of a common language is also only a stumbling block that hinders our view of common listening'. (2007) In the common listening that Sleyerl evokes in her preface to the German translation to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal text *Can the Subaltern Speak?* there is a passivity that resonates with Bataille's 'unleashing of passion', (Nancy, 1991, 32) which has nothing to do with enthusiasm, free will or subconscious desire, but is 'the passivity, the suffering, and the excess [...] of sharing its singularity'. (32) The listener is irreducible to her- or himself. Sharing is inherent in this passivity of passion, or as Nancy writes, 'only exposition to the other unleashes my passions'. (32, 3) Therefore 'the passion that is unleashed is nothing other than the passion of and for community'. (34)

⁹¹ Nancy is referring to 'he' Jesus Christ.

Exhibition as Procuration vs. Exhibition as Staging

Spivak criticises Foucault and Deleuze (with Guattari) for not being 'aware that the intellectual within socialized capital, brandishing concrete experience, can help consolidate the international division of labor', (2015, 69) what they do with their position, as she claims, which 'valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual'. (69)

She states that 'these immense problems are buried in the differences between the "same" words', (70) leading to an ignorance of Marx's differentiation between *Vertretung* and *Darstellung*, which is translated in each case 'in both English and French as *representation*. The first is representation as "speaking for", as in politics, "within the state and political economy", and the second is representation as "re-presentation", as in art or philosophy', 'within the theory of the Subject'. (70) 'Running them together', Spivak warns, 'especially in order to say that beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act and know *for themselves*, leads to an essentialist, utopian politics'. (71)

Drawing on the differentiation Marx makes between a 'feeling of community' that is a development of a transformative class "consciousness" from a descriptive class "position" (72) and a 'feeling of community whose structural model is the family', (72) which is characterised by 'use value' as opposed to the productive 'surplus value' of the 'intercourse with society' and 'class agency', (72) allows Spivak to 'suggest that the possibility of collectivity itself is persistently foreclosed through the manipulation of female agency'. (78)

For Spivak as 'the female intellectual as intellectual' (104) 'the staging of the world in representation – its scene of writing, its *Darstellung* – dissimulates the choice of and need for "heroes", paternal proxies, agents of power – *Vertretung*'. (74) She has 'a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish'. (104) Instead she feels obliged to 'acknowledge a long-term usefulness in Jacques Derrida' by drawing on his 'call for a rewriting of the utopian structural impulse as "rendering delirious that interior voice that is the voice of the other in us"'. (104) The 'essentialist, utopian politics' (71) she dismissed at the beginning of the text is dismissed by her own 'rewriting' as a staging of the subaltern, who for themselves, 'cannot speak'. (104)

Headiness vs. Headlessness

There is not a common language, just as there is not a common work. Nancy's 'stumbling block to a thinking of community' (1991, 3) is reducible beyond work and language to 'the essence of humanness' as such. 'The very basis of the communist ideal, according to Nancy, 'ended up appearing most problematic: namely, human beings defined as producers [...] of their own essence in the form of their labor or their work'. (2) Liberation of work from the communist ideal must not substitute its basis but, instead, recognize the problematic in its essentialism, which leads Nancy to add that the very basis of the communist ideal that is most problematic is: 'human beings *defined* at all'. (2)

Neither speaking for the other, nor speaking for oneself: the inoperative community stages a speech that is passive in as much as it is the speech of the other. The seemingly shocking news is that in this speech no human essence is accomplished, no human beings are defined. The definition of the human being is the stumbling block that is eliminated. And yet, this is precisely what saves the human being from becoming the slave of a total machine; not seeking '*jouissance*' (enjoyment) anymore, but joy (*joie*), 'attains [...] the point of touching but without appropriating it to itself'. (34) The difficulty of making art today is touched but not appropriated to oneself. The work of art proceeds as a joyful practice because it neither attains a definition of art nor of the artist.

Poverty as Use

In *The Highest Poverty* Agamben examines the problematic relation between rule and life in monasticism with the aim to 'construct', what he calls, 'a form-of life, that is to say, a life that is linked so closely to its form that it proves to be inseparable from it'. (2013, xi) The concept of poverty is understood in this context not as having less but rather as a renunciation of ownership. Poverty, in its highest form, is to think of 'a use of bodies and of the world that would never be substantiated into an appropriation [and] to think life as that which is never given as properly but only as common use'. (xiii) The relation between rule and life is thus inverted, if not dissolved, in as much as the rule is not obeyed, but lived. If 'it is life that is applied to the norm and not the norm to life [then]

what is in question, according to Agamben, is a shift from the level of practice and acting to that of form of life and living. (61)

It seems not surprising that the definition of 'the Franciscan's *forma vivendi*', (109) based on the application of life to the rule, must have caused a 'conflict' not only within the order but also 'with the Curia'. (109) From the perspective of the Roman Law 'the factual character of use is not in itself sufficient to guarantee an exteriority with respect to the law, because any fact can be transformed into a right, just as any right can imply a factual aspect. For this reason', concludes Agamben, 'the Franciscans must insist on the "expropriative" character of poverty, [and by] the preoccupation with constructing a justification of use in juridical terms [they] entangle themselves more and more in a juridical conceptuality [which] prevented them from collecting the hints of a theory of use'. (139)

This is the point from which Agamben writes a theory of use.⁹² Suggesting that 'the conception of poverty as "expropriative" [...] could have been generalized beyond law [by] connecting it to an important passage from the *Admonitiones*, in which Francis identified original sin with the appropriation of the will', (139-40) Agamben provides us with a possible origin of non-constitution, that is to say, a point at which nothing has been constituted yet in terms of appropriation and will.

Agamben explains that it is 'precisely at the point in the elaboration of scholastic theology when the will had become the apparatus that permitted the definition of liberty and the responsibility of the human being as *dominus sui actus*' (140)⁹³ 'in the words of Francis the *forma vivendi* of the Friars Minor is, by contrast, (Agamben 2013, 140) that life which maintains itself in relation, not only to things, but even to itself in the mode of inappropriability and of the refusal of the very idea of a will of one's own. (140) Agamben suggests configuring use 'as a *tertium* with respect to law and life', (141) not as 'the pure and simple renunciation of the law, but [as] that which establishes this renunciation as a form and as a way of life'. (142) If 'the refusal of the very idea of a will of one's own' (140) can be seen as non-constitution then the 'renunciation of the law' (142) can be seen as voiding, both placeholders for architectural poverty. Neither does it speak for the other, nor does it speak *for* itself. Rather, it speaks the other (and itself).

⁹² Published under the title *The Use of Bodies* (2013).
⁹³ This definition strikingly resonates with the individualistic position that calls for the 'oppressed subjects [to] speak, act and know *for themselves*' (Spivak 2013, 71) which Spivak so vehemently denounces.

The Habitual Condition

In *The Use of Bodies* Agamben refers to Galen who ‘decisively opposes use to [the Aristotelian] *energia*, just as a state or a habit is opposed to a movement and an operation’. (2015, 58) Galen’s definition of use is *euchrestia*, ‘a certain functionality, good functionality, which is to say, not an operation [...] but something like habitual condition’. (58) Use, in this sense of a habitual condition or good functionality, ‘never needs to be put to work, because it is always already in use’. (58) Or, ‘use is the form in which habit is given existence’, (60) that is to say, habit does not need to be put into act in order to exist.

In this way, architecture can be defined as use, as an architectural form in which habit is given existence. Although architecture in this sense does not prescribe any particular activity, its use nevertheless exists in its usefulness. Just as we can say that something can be used or abused in different ways, none of these uses or abuses is *per se* excluded from the habitual condition of that thing, and yet, each of these uses and abuses was always already included in its habitual condition since use happened in relation to that very thing.

Agamben uses the example of ‘the architect and the carpenter’ to explain that if they ‘remain such even when they are not building, that is not because they are idle-holders of a potential of building, which they can also not put to work, but because they habitually live in use-of-themselves as architect or carpenter’. (63) Whether architects or carpenters perform well in designing and building a building or not, their use of the computer, the CNC-machine, etc., constitutes them anew each and every time, even when they do not design or build at all. Therefore, there is no difference between the architect and the architect, a building and a human being with regard to its habitual condition and Agamben’s conclusion can be applied to both equally: ‘*Use, as habit, is a form-of-life and not the knowledge or faculty of a subject*’. (62)⁹⁴

Then we can say with Agamben, who refers to Spinoza and Deleuze, that even with regard to a building ‘only through the contemplation of potential, which renders inoperative every *energia* and every work, does something like the experience of an “own” and a “self” become possible’. (63) Dissociated from a modern notion of subjectivity, ‘the self [...] is what is opened up as a central inoperativity in every

⁹⁴ In this very opposition to faculty the notion of habit used here also opposes to Bourdieu’s use of it as a resource that is involved in cultural capital conditioning life.

Not an Inhuman Condition

operation, as the 'liveability' and 'usability' in every work'. (63) Preventing inoperativity from a purely positivist reading, we should add, that the self also opens up, in some of its possible operations, as the 'lethality' and 'abusiveness' in every work.

Agamben in *The Highest Poverty* describes how the Franciscans were unable to separate the definition of their monastic life from a justification with regard to the law, which, he speculates, would have given them the possibility of defining a form-of-life as a *tertium in terms of use*. In *The Use of Bodies* he still claims that 'what would have been decisive [for the Franciscan thesis] was a conception of use that was not founded on an act of renunciation [...] but on the nature of things'. (2015, 80) However, Agamben inverts the perspective by drawing on a concept of justice itself closely connected to the nature of things, 'that of inappropriability', (81) which he takes from Benjamin.

'Justice', writes Benjamin, 'designates the ethical category of the existent, [which] in the final analysis can only be [justice] as a state of the world or as a state of God'. (81)⁹⁵ In this fragment, Agamben claims, 'poverty is not found on a decision of the subject but corresponds to a "state of the world"'. (81) In such a just condition the world is necessarily inappropriable and can only be experienced as such.

It cannot be said that the self of a thing, which opens up as inoperativity in its work, is human, since the human is inappropriable for the building, just as it cannot be said that the self of a person, which opens up as inoperativity in her work, is thing-like or inhuman, since the inhuman is inappropriable for the person. If we wish to call the human 'human', then that which opens up as its self in inoperativity is the human, not as essential, but as its simple existence, whatever it may be. This is why Agamben can claim that the classless society 'is already present in capitalist society, just as, according to Benjamin, shards of messianic time are present in history in possibly infamous and visible forms'. (94)

⁹⁵ Agamben quotes from "Notes towards a Work on the Categories of Justice," trans. Peter Fenves, in *The Messianic Reduction: Walter Benjamin and the Shape of Time*, by Peter Fenves (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 257.

Ecstatic Experience

How to exist in a 'museum apparatus', which, according to Agamben, has been 'deprived of all legitimacy [by] the attempt [...] of the practice of the artistic avant gardes and political movements of our time [...] to actualize a destitution of work?' (275) The more one attacks the beast the bigger it grows. 'The only possibility of thinking a true anarchy', Agamben asserts, 'coincides with the lucid exposition of the anarchy internal to power'. (275)

Such 'exposition' is an ex-position, a position outside, and coincides with the passion expressed in ecstasy. With regard to the architect such an exposition can be completed by means of etymology – given that 'anarchy' and the 'architect' share the Greek term *arché*. Agamben writes:

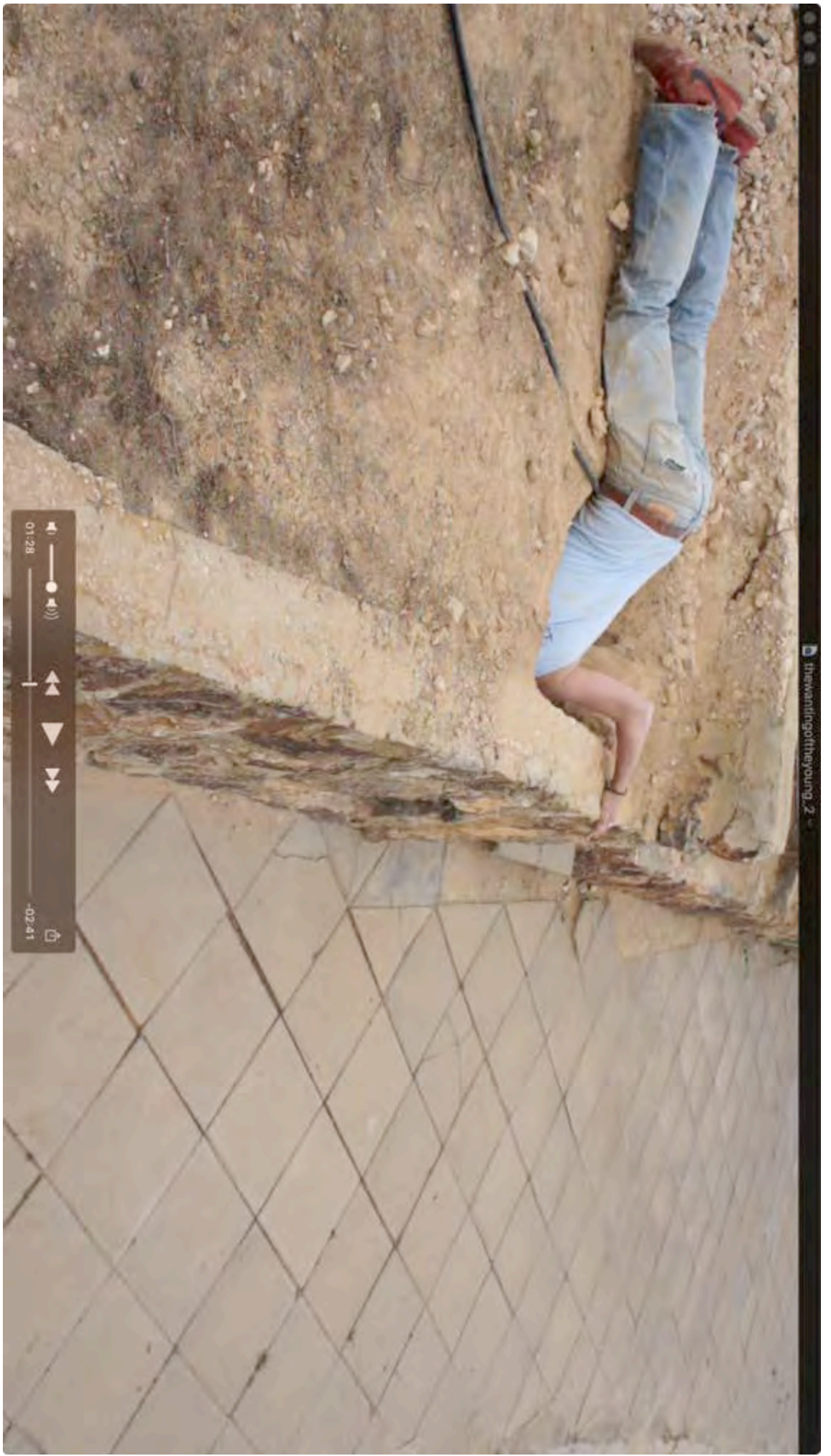
The term *arché* in Greek means both 'origin' and 'command'. (275) Anarchy can never be in the position of a principle: it can only be liberated as a contact, where both *arché* as origin and *arché* as command are exposed in their non-relation and neutralized. (276)

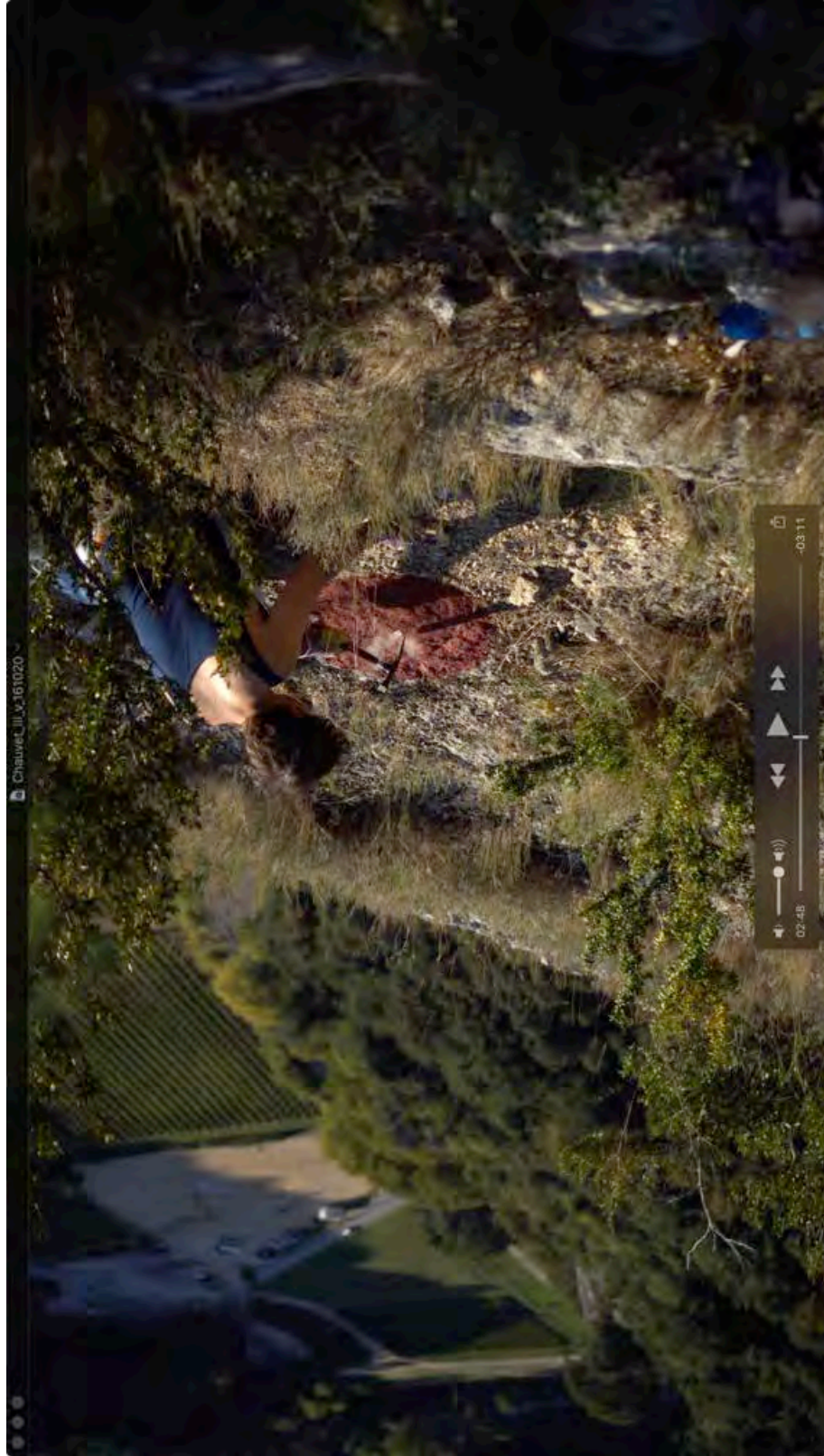
Separating the 'creative network' (origin) from the 'master builder' (command) and neutralising them by not conflating them but keeping them in touch, is the anarchic exposition of architecture. It is also the endless gesture of architecture: the fact that encounters take place in buildings.

When Benjamin writes in *Experience and Poverty* that the 'poverty of experience', (1999, 734) which he states for "the contemporary", (735) 'should not be understood to mean that people are yearning for new experience [but rather] long to free themselves from experience', (734) then this means that they accept their poverty as something positive of 'which they can make such pure and decided use of [...] that it will lead to something respectable'. (734) Purity and decision are the hallmarks of the contemporary individual: the cleansing that follows perpetual rejuvenation and the decision as terminated scission, the fusion of originally and self-command.

But the end is not respectable. Instead of having experiences 'they have "devoured" everything [having] such a surfeit that it has exhausted them'. (734) There is a depression after overconsumption of experience ending in sleep and dreams 'mak[ing] up for the sadness and discouragement of the day'. (734) In the dreams and the miraculous promises that exist in our world 'nature and technology [...] have completely merged'. (735) To the many 'a way of life in which everything is solved in the simplest and most comfortable way [comes] as a tremendous relief'. (735)

If 'the contemporary' is undissociable from the developments of technology, then it is indispensable to think the 'poverty of experience' it has created associated to technologies of power. Not that 'the many [are less] human than [...] a few powerful people'; (735) But we need to have an experience of poverty, 'step back and keep our distance'; (735) Or, as Bataille puts it: 'Experience would remain inaccessible if we didn't know how to dramatize'. (1988, 117)

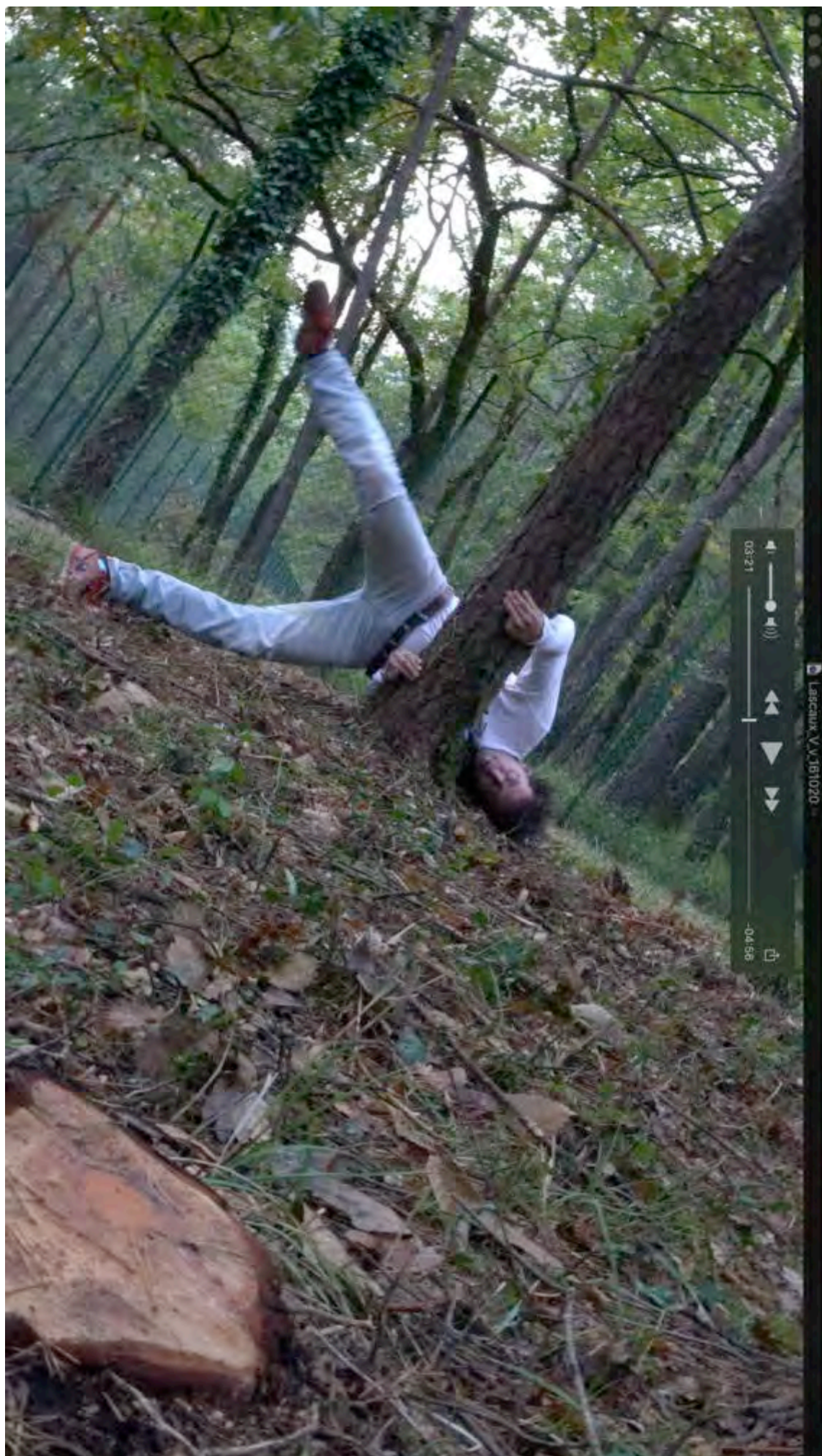




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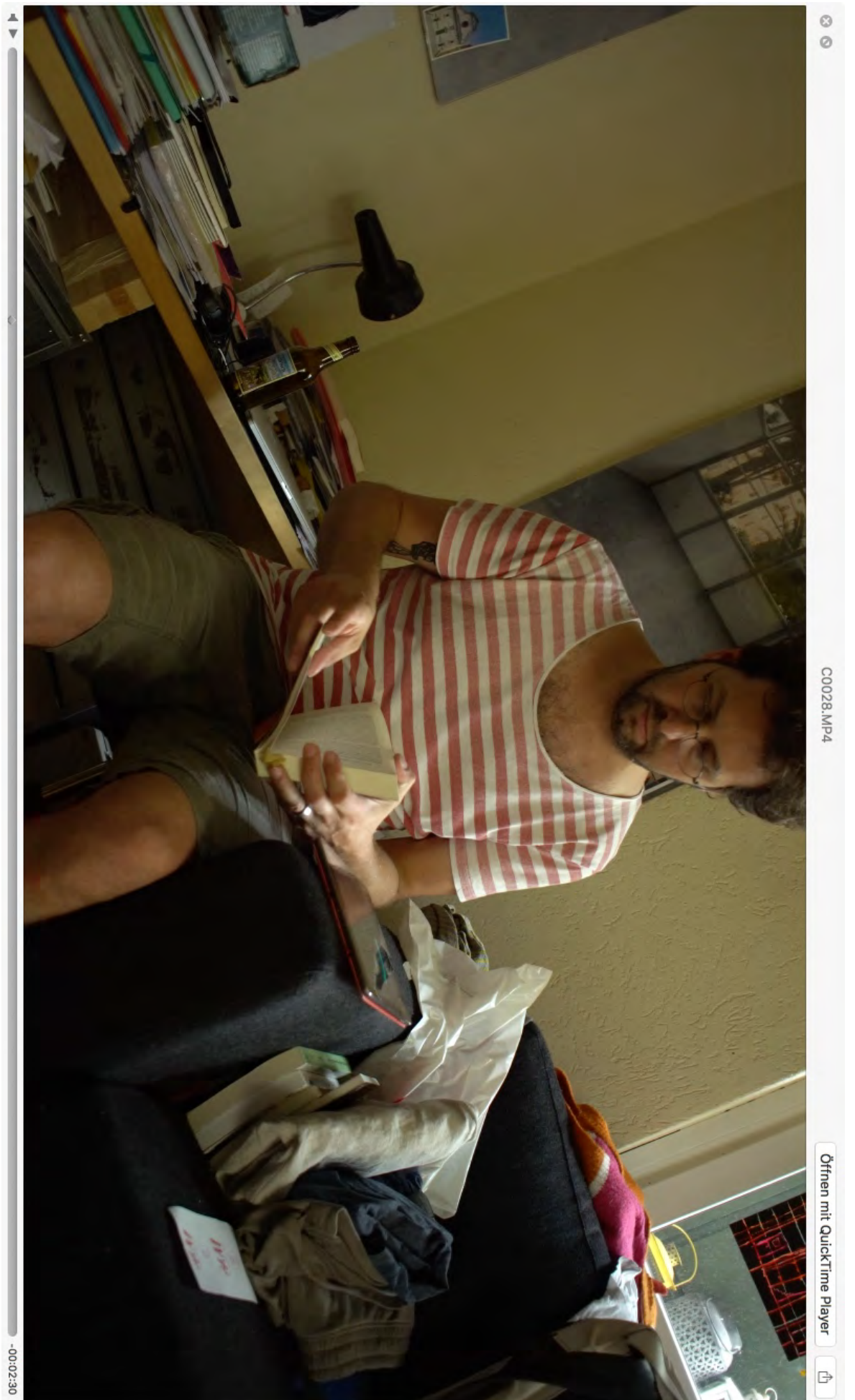
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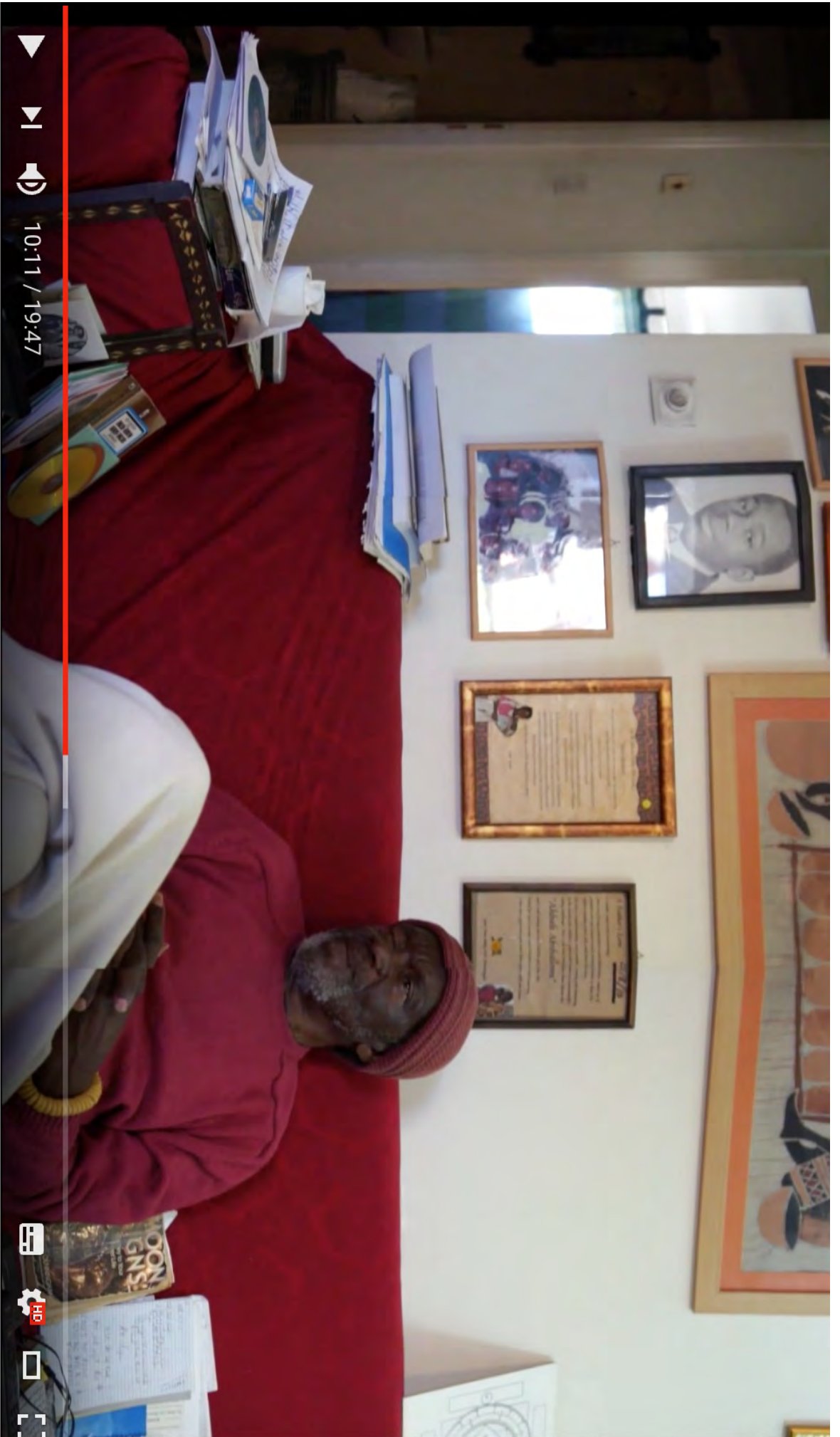


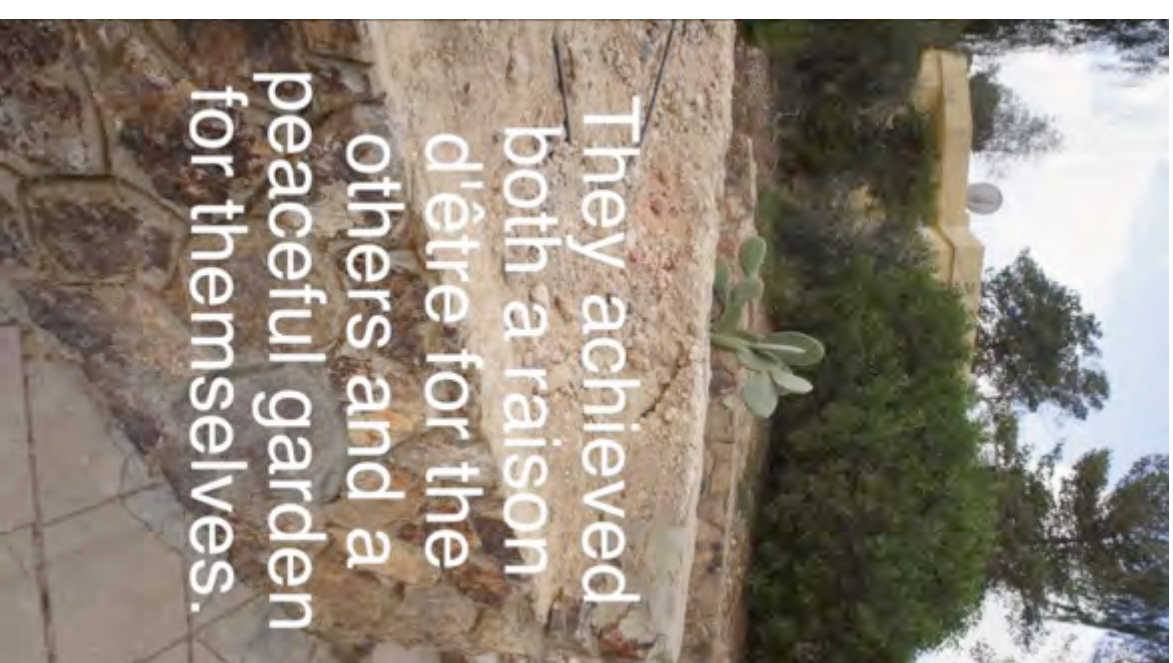


Figure 47 Hardlitz, R., *Road to Jericho*, video, Jericho, 2016, video: the author, 2016



Figure 48 Hardlitz, R., *Unoccupied Territories 1/3*, video tŷpŷtich, Arad, 2016, video: the author, 2016

Figure 49 Hardlitz, R., *Unoccupied Territories 3/3*, video tŷpŷtich, Arad, 2016, video: the author, 2016



Rather like my grand-daughter, who, when she moved from one room of her flat to another, used to think that a different sun was shining into each one; so the cinema marked the advent of an independent and still unknown cycle of light.

(Virilio 1989, 13)

[Tactile] appropriation, developed with reference to architecture, in certain circumstances acquires canonical value. For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means; that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation.

(Benjamin 2007a, 240)

FILM: BUILDING CINEMA

Filmmaking as *Architectural Art*

Building Bedroom

The basic association of architecture with the *polis* is not mistaken; however, it must be rethought in terms of *metropolitics*, that is, in terms of capital's subsumption of the political by economy.

The 'metro' of metropolitics is the controlling measure of politics. Politics is not lost in metropolitics; it is dominated by the economical measure of the 'metro'. To eliminate the 'metro' seems impossible. It is the engine of western society's development since at least the Enlightenment, or as Martin puts it: 'classical German

philosophy is at best an unconscious philosophy of capital'. (2007, 21) If the qualifier of capital is abstraction, then knowledge is its first medium, its first capital, its first head. While one studies in one's head, it is in the study, the small private library, as opposed to the preservation of scripture by the monks in the libraries of the monasteries, where the accumulation of abstracted capital as knowledge starts, or restarts. The origin of the metropolitical may be traced further to early humanism in the Renaissance, and particularly to the study of Petrarch.⁹⁶ The private libraries of the merchants, the *Wunderkammer*, public libraries, and museums are conceptual and spatial products of the study. The advent of the digital public library in the (private) Internet, and its production and its consumption in *quasi*-private spaces should not be underestimated in this genealogy.

While the spaces where public individuals move, both the real spaces of the cities and the virtual spaces of the digital world, are increasingly privately owned, at the same time many individuals feel compelled to make their most private intimacies public. However, this urge for public contact takes place almost exclusively in privately dominated spaces. Consequently, it is deceiving and turns every attempt

⁹⁶ See: *Das einsame Leben*. (Petrarca 2004)

of publication into a satisfaction of private needs. The result is a sharing of loneliness, without community.

It may seem necessary to isolate politics from economy, but the obvious impossibility of such a separation may point to another possibility: to reverse the control mechanism into a *politicometry*.⁹⁷ In politicometry, as opposed to metropolitics, the 'político' would be the authorising liberation of economy. The political public realm, as the common realm, would not cut back the economical private realm. It would redefine the care for the self as the freedom of putting oneself in a self-defining, that is to say, self-desired and not self-interested relationship to others.

⁹⁷ Arendt shows in *The Human Condition* that the separation of the economical from the political is what defines the private and public realms of the *polis*. In the private house, the *oikos*, the household, the *oikonomia*, is kept through relations of inequality distributing particular responsibilities hierarchically, while the public realm is reserved for the encounter between equal, and thus free, house lords. Since the *polis*, however, the city is defined by the economisation of the public realm, that is, of its privatisation, with the consequence of making the private concerns (that exist in the house, in the family) a public issue and thus complicating the relationship between economy and politics. (Arendt 1998, 22–78). However, even the Greek *polis* taken as a whole as a composition of public and private parts is already a politico-economical conglomerate, a *polimetris* in which the *metro* is the condition of the *polis*.

The city as the traditional public space is the primal realm of such a redefinition. I agree with calls for reclaiming the city – such as David Harvey’s call for urban revolutions. He carefully differentiates between reformist and revolutionary examples and also prudently reflects on organisational and institutional necessities ‘imagin[ing] a league of socialist cities much as the Hansatic League of old became the network that nourished the powers of merchant capitalism’. (2013, 153) Nevertheless – and Harvey acknowledges this – the Lefebvrian ‘right to the city’ must be reclaimed first, meaning that the individuals who please themselves in asserting their private satisfaction must be conscious of and committed to asserting their public right, consequently, claiming it publically. In this light not only factory-based struggles are questionable as the potential origin of a revolution, even if extended and supported by the surrounding environment. Also a generalisation of labour ‘to the far broader terrain of the work entailed in the production and reproduction of an increasingly urbanized daily life’, as Harvey calls it, (139) does not yet represent the oppressed public. Only Harvey’s finally proposed extension of the ‘struggles against the recuperation and realization of surplus value from workers in their living spaces’ (140) can be fully accounted for as a base for the reclaiming

of the public, because the private internet in the guise of a false public institution has sneaked in into our bedrooms.

The site from where to approach the problem then is not the city in the first place. The site of contestation is the publically displayed bedroom. The conservative position would be to give the bedroom back its privacy. Progressively, however, one has to engage in a public use of this digital and corporeal infiltration between our bed linen and us.⁹⁸

Perhaps this chapter should be called ‘building bedroom’,⁹⁹ rather than ‘building cinema’, as the bedroom is the most intimate

⁹⁸ The ‘apartment’ is an invention of the Renaissance, when due to the diminishing power of the Church the public realm of the street gained economic importance for the merchants. In hitherto communally used houses, in which spaces had much less defined functions than today, certain spaces were separated to assure the visibility of the publically relevant status. Since these spaces were set apart from the otherwise publically accessible spaces of the house, they were called apart-ments. The genealogy of the apartment corresponds to the genealogy of the ‘family’ as the bourgeois model we know today.

⁹⁹ There is abundant literature on cinema/film/documentation related to architecture/urban/art which is for obvious reasons only marginally important for this study. A selection would include: Bull *et al.* 2011; Cairns 2013; Hohenberger *et al.* 2016; or Penz *et al.* 2011. With regard to film and architecture I will mainly draw on Benjamin’s *Artwork Essay*, also on Virilio, Agamben, and Deleuze, however, a selection of the abundance of modern and contemporary thought dedicated to the cinema would include: Jameson 2007; Krakauer 1995; Shavrio 2010; Steyerl 2012; Stiegler 2010b.

private space exposed in the publically used private Internet. However, precisely in its cinematographic quality, through the moving image of video chats and posts, the bedroom becomes 'public' and, as suggested, today the bedroom-*quod*-cinema might be identified as the architectural typology replacing the 'factory' as the place of struggle.

In the Enlightenment, according to Immanuel Kant, eventual change could occur via 'the public use of one's own reason', of which only the 'man [sic] of learning', (2009, 3) like Kant himself, naturally could take charge. The architectural typology for such public use was the study, which is a private space.¹⁰⁰ The factory, as the architectural typology housing the origins of class struggle, is certainly not a public space in the sense of the street, but if not private then it is at least a collective space.

¹⁰⁰ Kant's essay 'What is Enlightenment?' of 1784 affirms that a revolution is possible and 'may well put an end to autocratic despotism and to rapacious or power-seeking oppression, but it will never produce a true reform in ways of thinking. Instead, new prejudices, like the ones they replaced, will serve as a leash to control the great unthinking mass'. (2009, 3) This is why the public 'can only achieve enlightenment slowly'. (3) Therefore, for Kant, 'a lesser degree of civil freedom gives intellectual freedom enough room to expand to its fullest extent'. (10) Kant's position is completely at odds with our ideas of anti-capitalist change. Nevertheless it is of interest that the space in which potential change is located is private.

When Martin writes that 'the transition from the history of spirit to the history of modes of production was a fundamental innovation by Marx, displacing the philosophical project to grasp the absolute by the critique of capitalism', (2009, 487) this correlates with the shift from the abstraction of thought as knowledge-form capital to the abstraction of labour as work-form capital or from the study to the factory, or from head to hand.

With regard to the transition from 'the study' to the 'factory' to the 'bedroom-*quod*-cinema' we should, however, look out for the next missing element in the .../knowledge/work/... sequence. If, as Martin proposes, classical German philosophy was indeed a philosophy of capital, albeit unconsciously, and if 'the transition from the history of spirit to the history of modes of production was a fundamental innovation by Marx', (2009, 487) then it must be asked: What is Marx's critique of capitalism an unconscious philosophy of?

The .../knowledge/work/... sequence may be put in a productive correspondence to Foucault's societies of sovereignty and disciplinary societies. The spiritual realm of knowledge and truth links with the will of a sovereign and its court structure, while the industrial realm of production and money links to the disciplinary rules structuring the

forces at play in a factory, taking into account the bosses, the workers, and the unions. Furthermore, according to Deleuze, the current societies of control, which succeed the disciplinary societies, are until now marked neither by *will* nor by *rule* but rather by (self-)control and (self-)management, which unsurprisingly is indifferent to what (and who) it manages since the principles of management are the same everywhere (and for everyone). Deleuze also reveals what, according to him, ‘perhaps [...] expresses the distinction between the two societies best’ (1992, 5):

discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold in as numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies. (5)

The shift from truth-value to exchange-value suggests another shift either to exchange-rate-value or to use-value, one which would require yet another history after the one of spirit and the one of modes of production, namely a history of relations and uses.

While in societies of sovereignty the notion of hierarchy makes little sense because the will of the sovereign is absolute, the balance of disciplinary societies depends on a hierarchy in which the exchange-value of each element finds its place according to temporally fixed rules.

In an ever-fluctuating network of innumerable factors, however, any exchange-rate-value is permanently floating – demanding sophisticated mechanisms of control. Relations become fundamentally contingent. What is fixed in the societies of control is not a particular state but the virtuosity of how it is dynamically managed.¹⁰⁰ Neither relations nor uses are fixed, but are constantly redefined. What is exposed more than ever in the societies of control is neither knowledge nor wealth, but rather, the use of bodies. The proposition of continuing the discussed sequence is .../knowledge/work/life/... and the corresponding activities, architectural typologies and body parts should reflect their most primordial functions: head, *studio*, thinking; knowledge; hand, *factory*; production, work; genitals, *bedroom*, reproduction, life.¹⁰² The joyful desilient counterparts would be: Non-knowledge or *acéphale*

¹⁰⁰ See Paolo Virno’s *A Grammar of the Multitude* on how virtuosity ‘characterizes [...] the totality of contemporary social production’. (2004, 61)

¹⁰² Genitals relate to the reproductive function of the body, which is somehow linked to the bedroom, although this link is certainly constructed. One could replace it with another bodily function: digestion; and consequently construct a relation to the kitchen and the bathroom. The use of ‘genitals’ here is not a final decision; rather, it is the example that seemed to fit best with regard to a contemporary digital exhibitionism related to the former cinema for the masses.

experience;¹⁰³ inoperativity or *achiral* existence;¹⁰⁴ erotic or *aphallic* ecstasy.¹⁰⁵

The student writing in the study for a collection of readers, the worker who in the night starts reading in the workman's house thus realising political equality, the workers of the factory who go on the street to demand fair wages: in each of these cases there is a private space shot through with politics.¹⁰⁶ The technological possibility of visually (but also conceptually) projecting political emancipation into the world from most private spaces makes the bedroom-*qua*-cinema a place related to the masses, as was cinema at the beginning of the twentieth-century, though, as opposed to the factory, it was unrelated to productive work. In the network of bedrooms, equipped with

¹⁰³ *Acéphale* is from Greek *akephalos*, 'headless', and the name of a public review and a secret society created by Bataille in the 1930s.

¹⁰⁴ *Achiral* joins the word 'chiral', from Greek *cheir*, 'hand' (as e.g. in chiropractic), with the negating prefix 'a-'; a figure is achiral if its image in a plane mirror can be brought to coincide with itself, which is the case if it has at least one axis of rotation; see Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chirality>.

¹⁰⁵ *Aphallic* is a neologism that joins the word 'phallic', from Greek *phallos*, 'erect penis', with the negating prefix 'a-'.
¹⁰⁶ Compare with Jacques Rancière's concept of 'equality [as] the condition required for being able to think politics'. (2006, 52) However, Rancière points out, 'equality only generates politics when it is implemented in the specific form of a particular case of dissensus'. (52)

uncountable masses, the gravity of this new cinematographic potential is of revolutionary measure.

The Demolition of a Wall

Paul Virilio writes 'the architecture of the set, with its spatial mass and partitions, supplanted free montage and created a new narrative ellipsis [...] an independent and still unknown cycle of light'. (Virilio 1989, 13) He illustrates this cycle with the example of the film *Démolition d'un mur* (*Demolition of a Wall*) made in 1896 by Auguste and Louis Lumière, a short single shot sequence showing the demolition of a wall by workers on a building site. The film is immediately projected in reverse, making the wall *quasi* miraculously rise from the dust to its initial position. Although it is technically possible that the Lumière brothers pasted a copy of the sequence reversely to a chronological sequence, it is more probable that they reversed the direction of the projection at the end of the screening – each and every time – letting the same footage of the film

run backwards through the projector.¹⁰⁷ It would not be surprising if the forward/backward movement was the result of the necessary rewinding of the film through the projector resulting in a playful back and forth eventually leading to the conscious 'introduc[ion of] trick photography to the world of cinema'. (14)

Henceforward, Virilio writes, 'doors would open in houses without a façade, so that the cross-sectioned partitions between rooms appeared as thin as the chinks between frames of the film'. (14) He concludes: 'in this way, film directors showed that they paid little attention to shifts in cinematic time, as 'even in a confined architectural space the whole problem is one of speed'. (14)

¹⁰⁷ The pasting of actual footage of film reversely poses a geometrical problem. Since the frames of the footage sequentially follow one under the other their reversal turns them upside down. To avoid this, one would have to cut the sequence in single frames and reverse their order. The technique my father and I used to produce reversed footage was to hold the camera upside down when shooting. Consequently, when turning the footage so that the order of images was reversed, the orientation of the image was also turned back on the feet, so to speak. However, one specific scene can only be filmed once with analogous film. Therefore it can be assumed that the Lumière brothers projected the reversed image by running the original footage backwards, simply rewinding it in front of the lens at original speed.

Indeed, the demolition of the wall and its subsequent reconstitution in the film is incommensurable with either the actual demolition on the building site or the interior 'wall' of the cinema on which the film is being screened. Nevertheless, one should be wary about too quickly linking an accurate reproduction of spatiotemporal conditions with authenticity. The shift from the mere filming of a demolition of a wall to its reconstitution by means of a trick 'was as astonishing for those early pioneers as it was difficult to invent'. (Virilio 1989, 13) This shift from the mere possibility of mechanical reproduction of an image to 'the work of art designed for reproducibility' (Benjamin 2007a, 224) is not consequential. In historical retrospect as well as from a technical perspective, a reproducible work of art is inherently designed for reproducibility yet the means of reproduction does not predetermine outcome. Filmic documentation of research changes the research in an unpredictable way: documentation is a work of art in itself. But documentation is an art form that creates a very intense relation between the documented and the means of documentation, generating a life form because it exhibits nothing but this relation.

Making a Difference by Indifferentiating Difference

‘Indifference’, writes Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, ‘has two aspects: the undifferentiated abyss, the *black* nothingness, the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved’, and ‘the *white* nothingness, the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members: a head without a neck, an arm without a shoulder, eyes without brows’. (1994, 28, my emphasis) Deleuze differentiates indifference, asking, ‘Is difference intermediate between these two extremes?’ (28)

On the *black* side, there is the ‘indeterminate’, the animalistic, which ‘is completely indifferent’. (28) In other words, it is *completely terminated*, since it is not de-terminate. It is indifferently rooted in its originality and nothing else.

On the *white* side there are ‘floating determinations’, scattered on the surface, which ‘are no less indifferent to each other’. (28) In other words, these ‘floating determinations’ are indifferent to one another because they float, because they are suspended, captured on the surface of a superficiality lacking spatial depth. Here they seem to be no less *completely terminated*, not as the originally indeterminate, but rather as

something that has ceased to be determined. Such a relapse evokes Agamben’s conception of contingency as ‘decreation’, as if it were a *de-determined* originality.

Is not the differentiation of indifference *as such* illogical, since it always has the same effect: namely, to be indifferent? Indeed, Deleuze asks if difference is not ‘the only extreme, the only moment of presence and precision’, rather than being ‘intermediate between these two extremes’ (28) of indifference. Thus he restores indifference to itself there is no more black and white stating that ‘difference is the state in which one can speak of determination *as such*’. (28)

If determination is the process that uproots a concept and potentially leads it towards a new terminus, then neither indeterminate indifference nor *de-determined* indifference describes such a process. They are always already terminated, albeit in different ways, as they provide for a groundless ground or an endless end. They are always either already over or yet to come. Any indifference can only present itself as transcendent differentiation, that is to say, as experience. Such difference pulls the ‘surface’ of ‘floating determinations’ back to the indeterminate ground; or, rather, it appears to raise the indeterminate

ground to the height of the ‘surface’ of ‘floating determinations’, thus showing that difference, to exist, has to be made, ‘or makes itself’. (28)

Such a difference is only the ‘extreme’ state of ‘presence and precision’, of ‘determination *as such*’. Indifference nevertheless exists in presence, but ‘difference is [the] state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction’; (28) and yet, that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it.

Deleuze uses the example of lightning, which ‘distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it’; this evokes the striking contradiction: ‘It is as if the ground rose to the surface, without ceasing to be ground’. (28) Deleuze’s difference operates on a differentiation of indifference as a ground that rises and grounds the determinations of the surface in itself. In other words, in Deleuze’s example, indifference does not distinguish itself from difference, which nevertheless distinguishes itself from it.

In the *chiaroscuro* images evoked by the example of lightning, in which ‘the determined maintains its essential relation with the undetermined’, (29) Deleuze insists on the cruelly and monstrosity of difference and determination. It is not his aim ‘to rescue difference from

its maledictory state’; (29) on the contrary, the shining ‘image of thought which presupposes itself’ must be destroyed in order to give way to ‘the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself’. (139) Although Deleuze does not say so explicitly, his strategy appears to be the inverse of what we see. Rather than making a difference by differentiating indifference, which, according to him, is a false move or ‘a poor recipe for producing monsters’, (28) he makes a difference by *indifferentiating* difference: ‘It is better to raise up the ground and to dissolve the form’. (28 9)

Political Exhibition Value

‘Architecture’, writes Benjamin in the last chapter of *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ‘has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction’; (2007a, 239) as ‘buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception or rather, by touch and by sight’. (240)

Deleuze's inverse or invisible conception of indifference, maintaining its essential relation with his concept of difference at all times, may be applied to architecture in Benjamin's terms. Benjamin assigns the visual appropriation of a building to 'noticing the object in incidental fashion'; that is, 'optical reception' 'determine[d] to a large extent' by 'habit', which is a means of 'tactile appropriation'. In order to avoid an understanding of appropriation as related to property, since the 'appropriation' of buildings Benjamin talks about has nothing to do with property or ownership but rather with the specific ways in which buildings are being *received* ('by use and by perception'), (240) and because Benjamin uses the term 'takile Rezeption' in the original, here, where the text does not refer directly to the English translation at hand, the term *tactile reception* will be used.

The 'state of distraction' in which a 'collectivity' 'consummate[s]' architecture corresponds to the raising of the ground of tactile indifference to the level of optical differentiation, rendering 'optical reception' tactile, or, rather, establishing the essential relations between the two. Indeed, we can see architecture and we can look at it; looking at it, however, always falls back on just seeing it – that is, on touching it

with our eyes, as if they were hands helping us find our way in a state of distraction.¹⁰⁸

For Benjamin distraction is instructive in comprehending what he calls the 'exhibition value' of the work of art, which he suggests is foregrounded in mechanically reproduced works of art such as photography and film. Benjamin opposes 'exhibition value' and 'cult value', which he understands as 'the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art [that] has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value'. (224) Due to the mechanical reproducibility of the artwork, Benjamin argues, 'the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics'. (224)

Whereas 'with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult [...] what mattered was their existence, not their being on view' or being exhibited, 'with the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of their products'. (224–5) In the ritual work of art the cult value *was* its use value – that it 'would

¹⁰⁸ On touching; see Nancy *Noli me tangere* (2008); Manning *Politics of Touch* (2007).

seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden'. (225) However, the political work of art's use value, the political, is already hidden behind its exhibition value. Politics, for Benjamin, is the location of the original use value *of* the exhibition value of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. The specific kind of approach to such art is not 'free-floating contemplation' (226), or its celebration as 'magic', (225) but 'that of testing', (229) of research and critically.

By drawing on architecture Benjamin shows that 'free-floating contemplation' is not the same as 'distracted consummation'; the two approaches depend on the 'nature' of the work of art. He argues that 'free-floating contemplation' is a false move, the mirror image of a fake cult, which in times of mechanical reproduction creates a fake spirit in his epoch, that of fascism; today, considering the omnipresence of corporations, the fake spirit is that of neo-liberalism. In the way this falseness of spirit is created there is a structural identity between fascism and neo-liberalism. 'Distracted consummation', inattentive critically, or 'absent-minded' examination, on the other hand, enable mastering 'the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history [...] gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation'. (240) While the first 'render[s] politics aesthetic', and so, according to Benjamin, may only 'culminate in one

thing: war', (241) the latter politicises art, distracts from aesthetics, and thereby allows for a consummation of history: 'Communism'. (242)

Benjamin's criticism of humankind's self-alienation is as true for neo-liberalism as it was for fascism: '[Mankind's] self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order', (242) albeit today under the guise of an aesthetic of no aesthetic. Benjamin's response to fascism in the form of politicising art and, hence, his defence of communism, is as true today, however, taking into account the transformed relation between art and life in neo-liberal conditions.

Architectural Art as Critical Theory

Touching theory

Theory understood not as knowledge but as touching allows architectural practice to be determined as a means of understanding the world by such politicised tactile reception, rather than as a tool for shaping it. The politicising of today's works of art by tactile receptions takes place in artists' endlessly but critically lived labour and gestures. Any work of art is theoretical today by means of such a practice of touching. Discursive practice and its seemingly paradoxical use in works of art should be read, therefore, as the self-critical manifestation of a refusal to stop working as art. The hope of evicting the neo-liberal ideology of control and compliance resides in tactile reception as a means of theoretical understanding, rather than as knowledge fabrication, which is critically lived in an architectural practice that attempts to understand itself as architecture.

Agamben's essay 'Absolute Immanence' constitutes a possible foundation of his philosophical project as a form of philosophical inheritance (from Foucault and Deleuze), based on the assumption that, 'today, blessed life lies on the same terrain as the biological body of the West'. (Agamben 1999a, 239) Agamben notes that for Deleuze 'life as absolute immediacy is defined as "pure contemplation without knowledge"', (233) continuing:

Deleuze's two examples of this 'contemplation without knowledge', this force that preserves without acting, are sensation ('sensation is pure contemplation') and habit ('even when one is a rat, it is through contemplation that one "contracts" a habit'). What is important is that this contemplation without knowledge, which at times recalls the Greek conception of theory as not knowledge but touching (*thiggin*), here functions to define life. As absolute immanence, *a life*... is pure contemplation beyond every subject and object of knowledge; it is pure potentially that preserves without acting' (233–34, incorporating quotations from Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 212–13)

Agamben suggests in a sub-clause, as if he felt the need to hesitate before actually touching on it, that what defines life is *theory*, if conceived not as knowledge but as touching. Theory, as 'absolute immanence', is pure contemplation beyond any subject or object of knowledge; it is the theoretical as pure potentially that preserves itself

without acting, as the ‘eternal return’ of ‘the yet-to-come’. (Deleuze 1996, 91)

Not only corporate architecture but also contemporary architectural production as a whole understood here as the totality of building production is dominated by neo-liberal conditions; beyond star architecture this includes and challenges architectural and urban initiatives such as community building, urban gardening, and local or ecological architecture. These initiatives cannot escape the neo-liberal pull, as under capitalist conditions everything can be made profitable. More importantly, neo-liberal activity functions not unlike urban gardening. Each of these urban activities operates as if and as part of a self-regulatory market economy. As contemporary architecture under such conditions often seems to be ruled by absolute immediacy and indifference, one might claim that contemporary architecture and its production is absolutely theoretical, in terms of contemplation without knowledge. Following Agamben’s claims that beatitude and the biological body of the West today lie on the same terrain, there is absolute indifference between all forms of spatial production.

Nevertheless, considering indifference as more than a symptom of the neo-liberal condition and trying to understand it in relation to

architecture by means of lived critical philosophical and artistic enquiry instead, it is possible to use indifference through an appropriation of indifference to humankind’s ends. Rather than resisting or countering neo-liberalism as an ideology, this strategy bears witness to the work of thinkers who try to understand the neo-liberal condition as it presents itself in reality, to grasp and defer its political potentials to unexpected grounds. (Fisher 2009; Feher 2009) It equally bears witness to those thinkers who have a historical understanding of neo-liberalism not as an extreme of capitalism but as an ideology. (Mirowski 2013; Dardot *et al.* 2013) According to Mirowski the perversion of this ideology is that ‘neoliberalism as a worldview has sunk its roots deep into everyday life, almost to the point of passing as the ‘ideology of no ideology’. (2013, 28) ‘The most thorough examination of ‘how contemporary architecture became an instrument of control and compliance’ to date can be found in Spencer’s *The Architecture of Neoliberalism* (2016, subtitle). Spencer, however, deliberately remains on the level of ‘unproductive negativity and its hateful criticality’ (163) without providing an alternative, neither in content nor in style.

When the aesthetics of the dominating ideology becomes anti-aesthetic then things become complicated for politicised art. To keep faithful to its political anti-aesthetic, art must claim its lived criticality by

saying more than what art looks like (in its *not* looking like anything whatsoever). At first sight ‘neo-liberal’ and ‘artistic non-aesthetic’ look the same. Looking closely, however, one says more than the other – but this is more haptic than visible. Such a haptic dimension of theory in discursive practice, as the politicised dimension of art, can still only be felt in a state of collective distraction, as Benjamin suggested.

Criticality of Architectural Gestures

Benjamin assigns ‘contemplation’ of a poem or a painting to ‘middle class society’. In the decline of the latter, however, ‘contemplation became a school for asocial behaviour [that] was countered by distraction’. (238) Contemplation and distraction are received and valued on the plane of the exhibition value of the work. In distraction Benjamin perceives a shift from a distant presentational exhibition to the quality of touch. Drawing on the Dadaists, Benjamin describes their art as ‘an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality’. (238) ‘Film, the distracting element

of which is also primarily tactile, being based on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator’, for Benjamin, like Dadaist art, ‘constitutes’ a ‘shock effect’, however, technical and not moral. ‘By means of its technical structure’, Benjamin concludes, ‘the film has taken the physical shock effect out of the wrappers in which Dadaism had, as it were, kept it inside the moral shock effect’. (238)

The conjunction of Benjamin’s insistence on architectural haptic habit that is reproduced in cinematographic space as ‘absent-minded’ examination with Agamben’s insistence on theory as touching is not only remarkable but also extends Benjamin’s call to Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of ‘contraction’. While it is certainly important to rely on contemplation ‘at the turning points of history’ it is questionable that the latest technological innovation is the appropriate means for its artistic application. If, as Deleuze remarks, ‘the two operations belong to the same horizon’, for example, ‘life becomes resistance to power when power takes life as its object’, (1988, 92) then taking the latest technological development as its starting point for investigation cannot be the most appropriate, because there is no most appropriate.

Agamben points to such a difficulty when he remarks that ‘the concept of resistance here must be understood not merely as a political

metaphor but as an echo of Bichat's definition of life as "the set of functions that resist death". Remembering Foucault's crisis resulting from his realisation that 'life is what is capable of error', we can understand the whole *inverted* complexity of the problem when Agamben is critical whether '[the concept of life as "the set of functions that resist death"] truly suffices to master the ambivalence of today's biopolitical conflict, in which the freedom and happiness of human beings is played out on the very terrain bare life that marks their subjection to power'. (1999a, 232)

As human beings subjected to this biopolitical conflict we touch our own lives and it does not surprise that the last moves of Foucault and Deleuze are concerned with life, and more precisely, with the self. However, is not this move, according to their own assertion of 'error' and a vitalism rooted in the inactive 'contraction of the elements of matter', a shadowboxing that, rather than striking a breach into potential futures, multiplies the biopolitical monstrosities themselves? Should not one take seriously Benjamin's reinsurance of the cinematographic space in architecture architecture here understood as the realm of 'use', 'touch', 'habit', and gesture, in so far as gesture is understood not as an actualisation of a means towards an end but rather as a means as such?¹⁰⁹

Architecture tends towards tactile reception by the masses independently of its (ideological) means of production. This tangibility beyond visibility is its political potential and our hope. Architecture tends towards an indifferentiation of itself in its environment, in which habit, as a contraction, as a life, as an imagination, always tells more than what we see. Even though Bataille may be right that architecture 'is only the ideal soul of society, that which has the authority to command and prohibit' (Bataille 1971: 88, 1171, as translated in Hollier 1992, 47), and thus represents dominant ideology, it is also true that architecture always tells us more than any ideology would want us to see.¹⁰⁹ The potential for the criticality of architecture but also the potential for its non-knowledge, its inoperativity, its eroticism resides not in its making but in its tactile reception, in touch: not in architectural practice as a means of producing architecture, but architectural practice as a means of understanding itself as architecture: architecture as a means of understanding what and how architectural practice produces.

If we may conclude that the indifferentiation of art into life is already proper to architecture and that this artistic process of

¹⁰⁹ See the model photographs by Demand, who builds models of photographed, ideologically charged scenes, however, eliminating those elements that charge it with ideology, thus exhibiting their pure gesture.

indifferentiation might be called an architectural gesture, then we must conclude that the making of architecture, in order to be an architectural gesture, indifferentiates itself into lived architectural practice by tactile reception. Only if the lived criticality of (architectural) making coincides with the criticality of the made (architecture) is there hope for evicting the neo-liberal ideology of control and compliance.

The Architectural Gesture of Building Cinema

If the mode of tactile reception developed with reference to architecture ‘finds in film its true means of exercise’, (Benjamin 2007a, 240) in what way other than the nowadays out-dated ‘shock effect’ does film meet architecture’s mode of reception halfway?

In his *Notes on Gesture* Agamben claims that ‘*the element of cinema is gesture and not image*’. (2000, 55) Extending Deleuze’s concept of movement-image Agamben argues that in it ‘the mythical rigidity of the image has been broken’. (55) ‘Neither *poses éternelles* (such as the forms of the classical age) nor *coupes immobiles* of movement’ (55) are images

properly speaking. In each case they establish a relation to spatio-temporal movement by means of ‘voluntary memory’ (known or unknown history) or involuntary memory (the before and after of the momentary section the image captures). Each image ‘could be seen not as immovable and eternal forms’ writes Agamben, ‘but as fragments of a gesture or as stills of a lost film’. (55 6) ‘Cinema’, which exposes the gesture as such in what Deleuze calls *coupe mobile*, ‘leads images back to the homeland of gesture’, (56) concludes Agamben.

If applied to an activity enacted by an actor in a film, what constitutes the gestures is neither the actor’s practice of acting (which would include rehearsals, multiple takes, isolated actions, etc.) nor the finality of the enacted act (e.g. the act of killing another person does not end in the death of another actor). The example Agamben gives which neatly fits the site of the bedroom-*qua*-cinema is pornography. This example is pertinent because it makes the relation of the gestures of the actors to the audience explicit:

Just as in a pornographic film, people caught in the act of performing a gesture that is simply a means addressed to the end of giving pleasure to others [...] are kept suspended in and by their own mediality for the only reason of being shot and exhibited in their own mediality and can become the medium of a new pleasure for the audience (a pleasure that would otherwise be incomprehensible). (58)

Strictly speaking, the practice of the pornographic actor is acting, not giving pleasure to others, and the acting produces not the pleasure of the other actor, but the pleasure of the audience. Certainly, the actor's enactment of giving pleasure does not make the actor a sexual maniac in private life, just as the other actor cannot claim to have been sexually harassed. The actor's enactment of giving pleasure is neither a practice (acting as such, whatever it is, is the actors end in itself) nor a production (the film and its exhibition with a certain effect in a cinema is the action's end). The actor's enactment of giving pleasure is nothing but gesture as 'pure and endless mediality'. (59)

In the same sense, in language, 'the gesture is [...] communication of communicability'. (59) Analogically we can say that in architecture the gesture is building of buildability. Moreover, just as in language communication can be spoken or written, in architecture the gesture is the active building of buildability and the built building of buildability.

According to the same logic with which Agamben claims that 'from this point [gesture as communication of communicability] derives [...] the proximity between [...] philosophy and cinema' (59) we can propose that, just like 'cinema's essential "silence" [...] is [...] exposure

of the being-in-language of human beings', (59-60) architecture exposes its building in its own mediality.

In this sense the architectural gesture can be seen as received from cinema in its being-in-language and in their shared principally of tactile reception resides their conspirational potential.



Figure 50 Hardliz, R., *Cinema Car*, car transformed into a cinema, Berne, 2016, photo: Nicolas Grandjean, 2017



Figure 51 Hardliz, R., *Cinema Car*, interior view, Berne, 2016, photo: Nicolas Grandjean, 2017



Figure 52 Hardlitz, R., *Cinema Car*, interior view, Berne, 2016, photo: Nicolas Grandjean, 2017



Figure 53 Hardliz, R., *Cinema Car*, exterior view with guests approaching, Gas Works Berne, 2017, photo: Nicolas Grandjean, 2017



Figure 54 Hardliz, R., *Cinema Car*, exterior view with guests leaving, Gas Works Berne, 2017, photo: Nicolas Grandjean, 2017

Conclusive Notes

Idiotic Research

The idiot is neither the one who does what seems rational nor the one who does what seems pleasurable, according to Deleuze. Referring to Dostoyevsky, for him the idiot is the one who knows that ‘beyond consciousness and passion’¹¹⁰ there is a question, there is a question, there is a question – but what is it? Maybe research is idiotic, when it is searching for questions rather than answers. To answer this question, one would have to start with the results and then ask, by looking at the work, whether there is (or there will have been) a question. The result is, in short, a thesis that is a production of a mode of writing and, in the case of a mixed mode thesis, also a production of other modes of researching. If there appears knowledge then it has been hardly produced; rather, it has been having – not in the sense of possessing, rather as habituating – and using knowledge (or ways of knowing) by means of the work of art.

This writing has found a mode that at times seems authorless; theoretically, however, it cannot afford this absence entirely. The artist writing a thesis confronts the non-art of writing a thesis with the writing of a thesis as art. The encounter between the conventions of research and the *ethos* of art takes place, however, as art, with nothing at its place. This writing builds its ‘logic’ and ‘integrity’ in an original sequence of ‘quotes’ and ‘glosses’, as Benjamin suggests in his *Program for Literary Criticism*, which draws a critical sketch of original knowledge by saying nothing new, as it were. Glorious or not,

¹¹⁰ Thinking of the differentiation Spivak makes between ‘desire’ and ‘interest’ here Deleuze’s distinction, which seems to assign ‘passion’ to the unconscious or irrational, appears as banal. Using a term Latour borrows from Gabriel Tarde we might discern *rational interests* from ‘*passionate interests*’, on the one side, and *disinterested desire*, on the other. The difficulty of imagining a person doing something that is absolutely disconnected from this person’s interests provides the justification of calling this person an ‘idiot’. But it is also the precise opposite of the world Voltaire was fighting in *Candide ou l’Optimisme*, where all events are concatenated in ‘the best of possible worlds’ (‘Tous les événements sont enchaînés dans le meilleure des mondes possibles’. (Voltaire 2007, 149)), at times recalling the ‘smoothness’ of our own. ‘That’s well said’, answers Candide and, by turning to a work that is being demanded from him and that will give him joy, adds: ‘*mais il faut cultiver notre jardin*’. (150)

my hope is that *disinterested desire* shines through – communes passionately – shedding a light (on things) that may not be new but unknown.

Equally, the mode of taking care of knowledge by other means than writing draws the conventions of research into the *ethos* of art. In this draft, the visual non-art character of research practice and documentation touches the work of art, its practice. In the beginning, as described in the introduction, art practice literally took the writing of a thesis as if it were its own practice and filmed it, inevitably realising that any form of documentation generates its own gestures forming another practice and therefore never represents what is being documented other than the act of documenting as such.

One could also, conveniently, distinguish between discourse and spatial practice. At least since Foucault's discourse on language we know that discourse is a spatial practice. However, consequently, does he not also show us inversely, at least unconsciously, that spatial practice is discursive? When building a (research) wall parallel to an already existing wall as its inverted model then this entire setup – the walls, the gap between them, and the territories that are both supporting them and being separated by them – enter in a relation with various sociocultural and spatial discourses.¹¹¹ Through an original sequence of spatial 'quotes' and 'glosses' the wall draws a line that *is* a critical sketch of original knowledge, with its own 'logic' and 'integrity', by constructing nothing new, as it were. Equally to writing, in spatial practice *disinterested desire* may shine through shedding lights hitherto unknown.

Such work of art, inverted by (gravitational) forces, constitutes a model that may contribute to a new understanding of architecture, less as consumed, but rather as consuming itself, or understanding architecture as being and having a habitual condition. It may also contribute to a formulation of art practice that spends itself in a voiding and thus becomes a critical life-form *vis-à-vis* the dominant ideologies. By looking at what has been done, a seemingly idiotic question for the work of art shows at the root of this work: *How to receive the political by Ph.D.?*

This question shows its idiocy by means of showing. It politicises a deeply rooted private use, which is idiotic. It reveals the question 'What is the question?' as its foundation. To reveal idiocy is idiotic. But the question 'What is the question?' is the most fundamentally critical, as the revelation of idiocy is pure political act. What remains to be done, in conclusion, is to keep the distance and to stay in touch and to continue – go to the crossroads!

¹¹¹ In the field of art i.e. with the *Green Light Corridor* by Bruce Nauman. (Nauman 1996)

Paris is the starting point to join two perspectives in a project: on the one side, the spatio-discursive exploration of the acquaintance and potential friendship between Bataille and Benjamin as an incommunicable instance of getting ready to overturn things; on the other side, the spatio-discursive cinematographic exploration of the current use of the prehistoric cave of *Lascaux* in the South of France.

‘Theoretical Coincidence’

When in the 1930s Benjamin was writing at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, Bataille was employed as a librarian there. Although they never refer to each other in their texts, their closeness and a substantial exchange are more than probable. For a discussion between Benjamin and the *Collège de Sociologie*, which was co-founded by Bataille, there is evidence furnished in letters and, for example, in a text by Pierre Klossovski. Benjamin’s disconcertedness provoked by the ambiguity of the *acéphale* a-theology caused him, according to Klossovski, to object to the group of French intellectuals the conclusions he had drawn from his analysis of the intellectual bourgeoisie German evolution: that the metaphysical and political pledge and outdoing of the incommunicable had prepared the psychological terrain favourable for Nazism.¹¹² They, in return, accused him of a personal version of a ‘phalanstery’¹¹³ renewal, which would make work an accomplice of desires and greediness thus ceasing to be its castigatory compensation. That Benjamin entrusted his manuscript of the *Arcades Project* to Bataille just before he left Paris escaping from the Nazis shows that the relation between the two thinkers was not just superficial.¹¹⁴ Considering that the *Arcades Project* as an expending theory reminds earlier works of Bataille suggests that the relation between the two thinkers was ambiguous: marked by attraction and repulsion.

¹¹² See Rupp 2007, 297. Note: The ‘incommunicable’ reminds the notion of ‘fake news’ spread by the current U.S. Government, which suggests that being the fake there is a true news that is not being communicated – and in fact is incommunicable in a culture of total deniability.

¹¹³ A *phalanstère* is a self-sustaining (utopian) community including the concept of free love. It was developed by Charles Fourier in the nineteenth century and realised at several occasions. The most famous example of modern architecture that draws on Fourier’s concept is Le Corbusier’s *Unité d’Habitation* in Marseilles. The Israeli Kibbutzim are influenced by the concept of the *phalanstère*.

¹¹⁴ Bataille also hid Paul Klee’s *Angelus Novus* drawing, which Benjamin owned. See last subchapter of the conclusion.

Gerhard Rupp's pointing to the notion of 'theoretical coincidence' with regard to the (missed) encounter between Benjamin and Bataille, which Adorno used for the relation between Benjamin and Ernst Bloch,¹¹⁵ seems promising not least from the perspective of an understanding of architecture as encounter. Which are the theoretical spaces of coincidence, in which they are in touch? This question regards both the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris (as an example of a potential architectural space of their encounter)¹¹⁶ and their shared discursive opposition to left and right tendencies, which shows in the search for 'prospective cultural practices' (Rupp 2007, 308) of writing. Such a 'theoretical coincidence' may be seen as a well-received habitual condition for a work of art that itself searches for 'prospective cultural practices' instead of the production of artworks. So we now may step sideways and look at the other project.

Frechship is not Friend

The work of the housekeeper at the cave of *Lascaux* consists in checking technical devices that are placed inside the cave to control temperature, humidity, etc. A simple man from Montignac, the near village, neither art historian nor palaeontologist, he has the privilege to examine the prehistoric paintings in the cave absentmindedly three to four times a week. I got this information from the housekeeper himself when I was preparing and realising my filmic essay on *Lascaux* in the forest above the cave. Late in the evening I and my Volkswagen-Multivan were the only ones left on the parking lot, except his car, and when he suddenly came out of the monitored fenced area of the original cave we got in a short conversation. He was proud of his privilege. It occurred to me that he is the only person who actually uses the cave, or that his work represents the main contemporary use of the painted cave of *Lascaux*. His use exceeds the access of scientific researchers by many times, which is strongly restricted due to the high risk of imminent destruction of the delicate paintings aged around 17.000 years¹¹⁷ by changes of the microclimate in the cave caused by the perspirations and radiations of the human body. Because the cave is situated rather close to the humidity of the forest soil above it,

¹¹⁵ See Rupp 2007, 298n.

¹¹⁶ See Figure 4: Is the person in the background Bataille? What is important here is not answering the question but having asked it.

¹¹⁷ Some palaeontologists are contesting the age dating allocating the paintings in previous periods.

the control of the instruments registering the slightest changes of the microclimate in the cave is indispensable and, therefore, his work is necessarily an everyday practice.

The idea for a cinematographic gesture as a means of shedding an unknown light on the paintings of the cave – or, rather, a first sketch of such an idea – consists in accompanying the housekeeper on his daily work with a camera and documenting his work by filming his hands. The precious paintings would appear in the background, fleetingly, fragmentary, and blurred, the hands appearing as touching them, caressing, stroking, striking, comparable to the use of hands and how they articulate space in the films of Robert Bresson.¹¹⁸ The idea is also a replication to the German director Werner Herzog's film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*,¹¹⁹ for which in 2010 he gained exclusive access to the cave of *Chauvet* with a 3D camera. The very beginning of the film exposes the dream of what the film could have been. The 3D camera levitates between two rows of vines cultivated at the feet of the sheer rock walls close to the *Pont d'Arc* in the *Ardèche* valley. Here the cave containing some of the world's most precious prehistoric paintings aged around 30.000 years has been discovered in the 1990s and named *Chauvet* after one of its discoverers. We float silently through the wintery vines, overlain by nothing but the title of the film, the name of the director and occasional blurs of snowflakes. Then the 3D camera slowly lifts – obviously manoeuvred by a drone – and opens our sight to the iconic *Pont d'Arc*, a natural rock bridge underneath which the *Ardèche* river floats, and then, from the off, Herzog's voice, pathetic by the clear attempt to avoid any pathos, breaks the silence – and the dream.

It is impossible to produce a work that can live up to the actual experience of the cave and the paintings – which is even impossible when being inside the cave, as the archaeologist Julien Monney attests in the film, who after five consecutive days working in the cave had to stop going there in order to digest or come to terms with the impressions the paintings made on him causing dreams in which appeared painted and real lions, not frightening, but 'deep' and 'powerful'. 'The position of every feature in the cave is known', says Herzog, by means of scanners recording 527.000.000 points over the course of twelve years. However, as Monney points out, the work to create new understanding of the cave through the precision of scientific methods is not the main goal:

¹¹⁸ See for example *Pickpockets*, where the hands of the thief are at the centre of the story, or *Au Hasard Balthazar*, where the hands of those who handle or mishandle the donkey Balthazar also articulate a history of maintenance: hand (French *la main*) + tenancy ('maintain' from Latin *manu tenere*, hold in the hand).

¹¹⁹ The film is accessible on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoSBMdAh_eY (accessed 9th September 2017).

the main goal is to create stories of what could have happened in that cave during the past. (Herzog 2010, 16'; Monney talks about his work, but also about his background as a circus artist, and his dreams)

In the same way, it seems impossible to produce a work that can live up to the experience of philosophy and art – unless in the work of philosophy and art itself, for which, as in the cave, it might also be necessary to step back and let the dreams of friendly lions, real and painted, contract in a habit by tactile reception.

An example for an artistic representation of an issue as charged as the *Chauvet* cave, that manages to regenerate an experience of a work of art that is not that what it says – as a work of art – but simply its artistic gesture, is the film *17 Letters to Deleuze_A Video Essay* by the theatre maker Peter Stamer,¹²⁰ in which Stamer ‘par[es] down Deleuze’s seven-and-half hours of dialogue [with Claire Parnet] to an 85 min found-footage flick’, as he writes on his website. In the original interview ‘the topics [Deleuze] was confronted with followed the [26] letters of the alphabet’. (Stamer 2015) In Stamer’s video essay, in which only 17 letters of the alphabet appear – ‘yes, I haven’t used each letter of the *Abécédaire*, I rather selected concepts I felt most familiar with in and for my own artistic practice’ (Stamer 2015) – when it comes to the letter ‘F as in Friendship’ Deleuze asks:

L’amitié... pourquoi on est ami de quelqu’un? (Stamer 2015, 24’)

Loony Tunes

Attempting an answer to his own question – which eventually might be applicable to our friends Benjamin and Bataille – Deleuze ventures a guess: ‘I have a hypothesis: everyone is apt to seize a certain type [...] of charm; there is a perception of charm. [...] It’s by the origins of charm that go to such an extent to life itself, to its vital root, that one becomes a friend of someone’. (24) Some are susceptible to receiving the signs of charm someone emits – others are not. Then Deleuze says that the type of friendship that inscribes it into philosophy is ‘the one who courts wisdom without being a sage’, (26’) adding that it is very curious and that he thinks we will only know what philosophy is once we have

¹²⁰ The film is accessible on Stamer’s website: <http://peterstamer.com/featured/17-letters-to-deleuze/> (accessed 9th September 2017). In the following I translate from French to English.

clarified these questions of friendship. He gives a hint: ‘If you don’t recognize a little trace of madness in someone, you are unable to love him/her’. (27’)

We all are ... a bit mad. [...] I am happy that this little insanity is the source of a person’s charm. (28’)

Isn’t this little insanity, the charm that appears when people do not know what to do, when they loose their heads, loose control, loose the pedals, isn’t all that just another way of becoming a *société acéphale*, exhibiting a critique of the societies of control, unhinging centrifugal or gravitational forces? Taking the camera as a prime instrument of control and making it loose its control – i.e. by means of deferred gravity – is a way of exhibiting critique of the society that belongs to it. Taking it to the caves and to the theatres – and to any unoccupied territories as they occur – seems like a good starting point.

Marc Azéma, a French researcher on prehistory, has published a thorough analysis on the movements of the animals represented on the walls of prehistoric caves.¹²¹ More than forty percent of the figures are animated. This percentage of animation is constant geographically and historically, thus forming an essential, as opposed to stylistic, as Azéma puts it, component of Palaeolithic art. The animals are not isolated symbols without life. On the contrary, they interact. Animation and interaction define, according to Azéma, ‘the terms of a stammering visual grammar’. (2010, 453, own translation) That is to say that from the first image on the walls of the Stone Age ‘graphic narration’ or ‘narrative figuration’ is born, which, Azéma claims, marks the beginning of ‘writing and of all the current visual medias’. (453, own translation)

The description of movement is narrative not because it tells a story; rather, it tells a story because its narrative potential is inscribed in the description of movement. This is why simply following the movements of a camera appears as comical. It produces excess movements – comical excess movements – that potentially can be conceptualised in a story.

If the animation and movements represented on the walls of prehistoric caves which at times have stunning resemblance to contemporary cartoons – are indeed the origins of writing, then writing could be seen, using a term Azéma uses in the title of one of his publications, as an ‘illusion of life’. (2010) The relation between ‘illusion of

¹²¹ See Azéma 2010.

life' and infrastructure is that infrastructure functions as the habitual condition for a form of life that cannot be entirely predefined.

Beyond the paintings in the caves, moreover, the reliefs of the walls of the caves themselves constitute an infrastructure for the comprehension of the paintings. Not just abstracted juxtapositions and superimpositions of drawings animate the potential narration; the images of opposing walls, for example, do so as well. This becomes evident to every visitor of a cave when the animals on the three-dimensional rocks start moving due to our own movements and the moving light of a torch.

Work on Crossroads

In *Prehistoric Painting—Lascaux or The Birth of Art* Bataille explicates, on the base of the human being's play and awareness of death, his theories of prohibition and transgression. Bataille also wrote a film scenario that was never realized, *La maison brûlée*, in which the audio-visual strategies for capturing the heterogeneous can be interpreted as an attempt of creating a filmic language of ecstasy.¹²² Benjamin, too, referred to prehistoric painting in his *Work of Art* essay, but more importantly, he draws on the 'tactile appropriation' of architecture to explain the politicising role he assigns to the work of art, notably cinema. In both thinkers' work there is an element of touch and capture (ecstasy or absentmindedness) that may be interpreted as based on a similar concept of architecture.

Benjamin's conception of architecture and Bataille's hidden concept of architecture coincide in that they do not support architecture as being *about* something. Rather, architecture exhibits itself as a life form, as a habitual condition, that communicates its architecturability. It speaks itself. It speaks *as* itself (or *as* something else, but never *about* something else). In as much as it exhibits itself – as in an illusion represented in a theatre – we could say that it exhibits an illusion of itself, which contains all the potentials in one scene, exhibited and lived:

scattered traces of remains, traces of a
foyer, caverns, furtive shadows, lamps (Bataille 2009, 182)

¹²² See Finter 2004, 85-107.

Conclusion

If as Hollier writes ‘a nonconstructive gesture [is] one that [...] destroys everything whose existence depends on edifying pretensions’, (1992, 23) then non-construction must not be understood as an alternative or a replacement of destruction but, rather, as its alteration, its heightening, its translation. Or, in other words, non-construction determines destruction in the sense that it saves it from its terminus and opens it for new possibilities, permanently. In the sense of the German word *Entscheidung*, which Benjamin used as *Ent-Scheidung*, we can also say that non-construction is not a decision as de-scission, but the introduction of a scission.

More generally it is thus a redefinition, not an expansion, of architecture. By separating the original creative networker from the commanding master builder, thus neutralising them by not conflating them but keeping them in constant touch, we could also say that it is an anarchic, or even anarchitectural exposition of architecture.

However, more important than any definition of non-construction or redefinition of destruction, the attempt of such a determination has lead to a change in my practices: a rethinking of filmic documentation as a filmic understanding of architectural relations in times of control. This – and the telling of this by means of the written thesis and the Cinema Car to those who can make use of it and respond to it – is an original contribution to knowledge. What struck me, though, was the experience that this determination was only possible by means of that stroke, which, out of nowhere, strikes.



Figure 55 Klee, P., *Angelus Novus*, drawing, monoprint, oil transfer method with watercolour, 31,8 cm × 24,2 cm, since 1989 at Israel-Museum, 1920

Figure 56 Hardliz, R., *Angelus Novus*, marker drawing after photographs of the original drawing by Ella Hardliz, Berne, 2017



Postface

Habemus Angelus Novus – The Anarchic Event

A last scene deserves attention, one that may rather be a continuous methodological reflection on the conditions of artistic existence and the work of art than a project as such. As I write in the introduction, the tattoo on my arm demands care or maintenance. This imperative allows me to have it, to bear it, and to use it. With a piercing it is still possible to speak of a possession because it can be eliminated quasi without trace: to do this with a tattoo is impossible even with the most sophisticated surgery. A tattoo cannot be possessed because it cannot be dispossessed. It is a paradigm. Its origin is the child and its relation to the parents, a relation that may be denied but never annulled. While today eternal bondage has fallen into disgrace, seen as authoritarian domination and limitation, the potential opening from the perspective of the impossibility of possession is liberating. Precisely because the care of the tattoo, the child, the garden, etc. is demanded it is a borderless having. This having is, again, not possession but habit. It is not merely doing or simple agency, not the *factum* as such that gives permission to what is done or made, to the facts. Permission is given because action has been demanded.

Benjamin bought Klee's drawing *Angelus Novus* in 1921 and hung it as a companion in every apartment he lived in. He entrusted it, with his manuscripts, to the custody of Bataille, who concealed it in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, when he fled the Nazis. Shortly after in 1940 he ended his life in Port Bou. For Benjamin, the Angelus Novus is the angel of history. He looks back on what the progression of history leaves behind. Embedded in times of war, Benjamin qualifies these outcomes as 'wreckage' and 'debris' resulting from 'catastrophic' 'smashing'. (2007a, 257–8) But the wind that carries the angel through time originates in 'Paradise' and has a 'violence' that makes us understand the universal condition of the angel of history. Perhaps our time has invented Paradise and history, and violence as a qualitative entity that comes with it. But what marks the Angelus Novus as an eternal creature beyond any current condition is the pure state of a witness to which he is reduced. In this state he cannot but 'fixedly

contemplat[e]’ (257) what he is being carried away from: ‘His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread’. (257)

As human beings, however, we do not have wings. The ‘storm [...] blowing from Paradise’ (257) is not carrying us steadily through time. Rather, we are doomed to build sails and sail against or into the wind, to take the wind out of someone’s sails, to be upwind or downwind, and to be blown down at times. We do not just stare at the condition of the world: we make use of it. This does not mean that we should turn around and face the future progressively, or that we should try to prevent the smashing or even try ‘to make whole what has been smashed’. (257) We should take the demand presented by the current state of the world and, importantly, witnessed by the angel of history, the *Angelus Novus*, as the liberating permission of creating our own past.

My tattoo is my *Angelus Novus*. It witnesses the catastrophe I produce by ‘piling up wreckage upon wreckage’. (257) That the tattoo is a gift to me given by my daughter has turned the world and its time upside down. I understand: my daughter is not younger than me; we all are in the same age, the living, the dead, and the unborn; the child is only a paradigm of all the non-dissociable forces of life, of life as inseparable; we have been caught by an eternal whirl making us believe that there is succession, progress; that ‘what we call progress, [is] this storm’, (258) which, in the end, is the motivated architectural potential of eternal encounter. Always witnessed by the angel of history, this storm both demands and allows further research.

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